

## JAVANESE LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE IN THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH PHONEMES

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### Abstract

Different element between two languages could trigger some pronunciation difficulties among the language learner including Javanese learners of English. Most of them have been speaking in Javanese since childhood. In addition, English as foreign Language is not widely used outside the class. Thus, Javanese learners of English encountered several problems in pronouncing English phonemes. This research is designed to investigate the difficulties encountered by Javanese learners in pronouncing the English phonemes and identify factors affecting their pronunciation of the phonemes in the Department of English Language Teaching of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto (UMP). The researcher used survey as the research method. The population in this research was 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semester students who had already passed pronunciation and phonetics subject. While the samples are those who had Javanese background. The data was collected through pronunciation test in a form of audio recording and interview. The major findings of this research are 1) the researcher found that the Javanese learners of English encountered difficulties in pronouncing 13 consonant sounds /z, v, θ, ð, z, ʃ, f, g, k, d, ʒ, ŋ, j/ and 17 vowel sounds /æ, eə, i:, eɪ, aʊ, ə:, ɔ:, u:, ɒ, ɪə, əʊ, ʊ, ɑ:, ɪ, ʊə, ɔɪ, aɪ/. While the rest, 14 English sounds /p, b, t, s, h, dʒ, m, n, l, r, w, ʌ, ə, ɛ/ were clearly pronounced by the Javanese learners of English. 2) There are four factors influencing Javanese in learning English pronunciation, among others are; age, first language, exposure, and motivation.

**Keywords:** pronunciation, segmental features, English sounds, Javanese, factors.

### INTRODUCTION

Any language learning including English is aimed to intelligibly communicate in the target language. To achieve English learning goal's pronunciation must be considered despite any other language skills since it has significant roles in communication. Several experts contribute to emphasize the significance of pronunciation. First, Allen in Hakim (2012: 244), states that pronunciation is one of language element that has big contribution to better English speaking. Alexandria (in Hayatinnufus, 2018: 31) states that it is crucial element since the ability to speak and use English in real communication is one objective of learning English as Foreign Language. Subsequently, Harmer (in Gilakjani, 2016: 3), also convincingly argues that having good pronunciation gives the students several benefits such as know sounds and sound features and improve their speaking immeasurably as well. Thus, pronunciation contributes in achieving better English speaking. In addition, native speakers are more likely to understand the speaker, even in spite of grammatical errors, if the speaker uses correct pronunciation. The aforementioned explanations briefly indicate that pronunciation can guarantee communication effectively.

Due to the importance of pronunciation, there are several elements of English pronunciation that must be well mastered. One of them is the English segmental

features for both vowel and consonant sounds. Nurhadi in Suryatiningsih (2015: 4) states that segmental features or segmental phonemes are phonemes that can be segmented into individual parts consist of consonant, vowel, and diphthongs. Vowel and consonant sounds extensively contribute to construct words. Thus, being skilled full in segmental features will make the students obviously understand and be understood by the others. On the contrary, ignoring the segmental features of the target language will damage the students' achievement.

As we know English is not used for daily communication. No wonder Indonesian learners of English encounter difficulties in English pronunciation include those who have Javanese as their first language (L1). Javanese language has strong and unique accent, dialect, intonation, and diction. It is not surprising that Javanese language is pronounced clearly, explicitly, with short intonation and stressing in some parts. In some cases, it is pronounced longer whenever the sentence is ended with vowel sound. After all, the Javanese heavy accent is brought whenever the learners pronounce English word or sentence (Hakim, 2012: 255). It indicates that there is interference from the students' habit of their native language towards the target language features (Weinrich, in Suwartono 2000: 4). Consequently, it hinders the students to pronounce the word accurately.

Interference occurs since there are differences between the native and target language. Javanese language interference toward English happens in various ways. First, Javanese students find it hard to move their speech organs. Especially, to produce English sounds that do not exist in Javanese (Baso, 2013: 128 and Hakim, 2012: 255). It results in incomplete acquisition. Second, there is a tendency to replace the target sounds with the Javanese sounds as well as to articulate the words as its phoneme (Laila, 2012: 58). It is happened mostly when Javanese students do not know how to pronounce certain word. Third, Javanese students face difficulties to recognize English sounds as well as differentiate similar sounds. For instance, sounds /f/ and /v/ are pronounced without obvious distinction (Herman, 2016: 5). In addition, omitting and adding phoneme are frequently done by Javanese students (Laila, 2012: 58). For instance, adding phoneme /n/ in word *the* as /nthe/. Omitting aspirations in the word pull /p<sup>h</sup>ul/ as /pul/.

Any foreign language learners obviously face difficulties including in acquiring the target language pronunciation. The difficulties are caused by many factors. Native language, age, exposure, and motivation are believed by several experts give big influence towards the learners' pronunciation.

#### *Age*

Age has been considered as one of crucial factors for successful of second and foreign language acquisition. In learning language, the younger is the better especially for achieving the target language pronunciation. There is a period of life to acquire language faster and easier. According to the Critical Period Hypothesis proposed by Lenneberg (in Ying, 2017: 44), the critical period starts from early infancy until puberty. It is believed one can acquire language optimally in that critical period. Amalia (2018: 2), also states that children in golden age, under five years old, are considered competent to observe what they received quickly including language. Otherwise, learning language

beyond the critical period makes the learners struggle in acquiring pronunciation of the target language. Nation and Newton in Zhang (2009: 38) states that if the students commence to speak in second or foreign language before six years old, the accent will not exist. If the students start to speak in L2 within seven to eleven years old, the accent will slightly exist. If the students begin to speak in L2 after puberty, the accent obviously exists. The meaning of accent is the students L1.

#### *Native language*

Most of English as Foreign Language (EFL) students have been speaking their mother tongue since childhood. The students' speech organs have been deeply implanted to produce the speech sounds of their native language. According to Ramelan (1994: 4) it is caused by the movement of the speech organs that never been trained to produce the foreign sounds. Zhang (2009: 43-44), adds that learners of a language speak the target language in different way. It can be slightly different or otherwise highly different than the native speakers do. Hence, the influence of first language is various. According to Zhang (2009: 44), there are three ways the native language can influence the pronunciation acquisition. First, the absence of certain English sounds in native language. Second, several sounds have the same phonetic features but different in the distribution. Third, similar sounds in two languages which are differ in the place of articulation or the manner of articulation.

#### *Exposure*

English as Foreign Language defined as the use and study of English by non-native speakers living in non-English countries in which English is not commonly used in daily communication. Thus, the term exposure is well described as how often the learners use English in daily life (Zhang, 2009: 44). The average of Indonesian-Javanese student learns English in the school. It is particularly begun when entering junior high school. However, most of them do not use English outside the class. In addition, pronunciation is taught lately in University level. According to Rosyid (2009: 8) the students find it difficult since in the previous they do not learn such a subject. However, for some students that have learnt pronunciation before entering university level have better achievement in pronunciation.

#### *Motivation*

Motivation deals with the learners' attitude and desire toward the target language. The higher the motivation is the more possible the students can achieve their needs. Masgoret and Gardner in Tanner (2012: 9) state that higher motivation leads to higher language achievement. Having personal goal can also influence the need and desire to achieve correct pronunciation. Motivation to acquire accurate pronunciation can be categorized into two. Gardner and Lamber in Zhang (2009: 42) group motivation into two categories: integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation means a desire of a learner to be accepted in the target language environment. While instrumental motivation is defined as a desire that is only oriented to achieve understandable pronunciation for their specific purposes.

## METHOD

Specific method in conducting research was surely needed as a guideline for the researcher. This research was meant to find out the Javanese students' difficulties on English pronunciation as well as factors that affect their pronunciation. For that reason, the researcher employed survey since it best served to answer the research questions. According to Suwartono (2014: 127), survey includes researches that aimed at gathering information to describe the phenomenon.

The population was the students who have already passed pronunciation and phonetics subjects. Those are the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semester students of English Education Department Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto (UMP). In this research, purposive sampling was employed. Arikunto (2006: 139) states that purposive sampling is used to get data for specific purposes. The researcher selected 25% from the population. The samples should fulfil several criterions as follows: pure Javanese, born in Javanese environment, grow up in Javanese society, and use Javanese language in everyday life. To ensure they fulfil the requirement the researcher asked the identity card of each of them

This research adopted both the quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques. Test as the quantitative data and interview as the qualitative data. The test was done to answer the first question to investigate the difficulties encountered by Javanese learners of English in pronouncing the English phonemes. Meanwhile the interview was used to identify factors affecting their pronunciation of the phonemes.

### *Test*

The data from pronunciation test was counted using the formula from Arikunto in Hakim (2012: 248)

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

P = the gained score

F = the total of correct phonetics

N = the total of Phonetics

### *Interview*

Data from interview was analysed by following steps: transcribing, analysing, data reduction, and concluding.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Javanese Learners Difficulties on English Pronunciation*

To investigate the difficulties encountered by Javanese learners of English in pronouncing the English phonemes, the researcher conducted pronunciation test to 44 respondents. The pronunciation test was done by reading aloud the given list of words that covered 44 English phonemes in initial, medial, and final position. The researcher assisted the respondents and used tape recorder to record their pronunciation. After analysing the respondents' pronunciation, the researcher found out that Javanese learners of English encountered difficulties in pronouncing 13 consonant sounds /ʒ, v, θ,

ð, z, ʃ, f, g, k, d, tʃ, ŋ, j/ and 17 vowel sounds /æ, εə, i:, eɪ, aʊ, ə:, ɔ:, u:, ɒ, ɪə, əʊ, ʊ, ɑ:, ɪ, ʊə, ɔɪ, aɪ/. While the rest, 14 English sounds /p, b, t, s, h, dʒ, m, n, l, r, w, ʌ, ə, ε/ were clearly pronounced by the Javanese learners of English.

### Consonant

In producing English consonant sounds, the researcher found that the respondents often made sound substitution. The respondents used to substitute some English consonant sounds with other English consonant sounding similar. Otherwise, they used their Javanese sound that resemble to the target sound. It occurred in some conditions such as when the target sound did not exist in Javanese phonological system, when they could not produce the target sound correctly, and when they did not know how to pronounce the word.

Sound substitution also occurred due to Javanese learners faced difficulties in term of the activity of vocal cord. The researcher found that the respondents frequently devoiced the sound that should be pronounced with the vibration of vocal cord. For instance, they devoiced sound /v/ became /f/, and sound /ʒ/ became /ʃ/. Also, they pronounced voiceless sound followed by the vibration of vocal cord as it was occurred in sound /f/ became /v/.

Instead of sound substitution, the researcher also found that Javanese learners of English the frequently deleted certain English consonant sounds in final position. It mostly occurred in English plosive consonant. Some of Javanese learners of English could not maintain the explosive sound in final position. As the result they seemed did not pronounce the sound.

### Vowel

The respondents encountered several difficulties in pronouncing English vowelsounds. The difficulties were in term of the length of the sound and sound substitution. Javanese learners of English used to pronounce the English word using their native language features. In other words, they pronounce English words using Javanese intonation. However, when it came to vowel sound, it hindered the Javanese learners of English to pronounce accurately. Many of them shortened the long vowel and longed the short vowel. It indicated that they had difficulties to erase their native language influence. Sound substitution did happen in English vowel sound due to Javanese learners of English difficult to raise their tongue to the specified height. Also, they have tendency to pronounce the words as the orthography writing.

### Diphthongs

The respondents encountered several difficulties in pronouncing English diphthongs. The difficulties were monophthongizedand sound substitution. The Javanese learners of English main difficulty in pronouncing English diphthong was in term of moving their speech organ from one vowel to another onesince Javanese did not have diphthongs.. It led them producing unclear sound. It seemed they only pronounce the first vowel. As the result, they often monophthongized the English diphthong into English pure vowel.In producing diphthong, the Javanese learners of English did substitution in several ways as well. First, diphthong did not exist in Javanese phonological system. Second, the learners did not master how to pronounce the sound

as pure vowel. Third, they tended to pronounce the word tested as the orthography writing.

### *Factors Affecting Javanese Learners Pronunciation*

To investigate the factors influencing the Javanese students' English pronunciation, the researcher used personal semi-structured interview to gain deeper information. The interview was done to 12 respondents to find out what factors that affected their pronunciation abilities. The 12 of them represented those who have high, medium, and low score in pronunciation test.

#### 1. Native language

The researcher asked two questions about first language influence. First question, to ensure the data the researcher asked "*Apakah bahasa pertama anda?*" (What is your first language?). All respondent confirmed that Javanese was their first language. The second question was "*Apakah anda menggunakan Bahasa Jawa untuk berkomunikasi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari?*" (Do you speak Javanese for daily conversation?).

Respondent 08.14: "*Iya. Bahasa pertama saya bahasa Jawa. Saya menggunakan bahasa jawa sejak kecil. Sekarang saya dapat berkomunikasi dengan bahasa lain juga (Indonesia dan Inggris) tapi bahasa Jawa tetap yang paling dominan*"

(Yes. My first language is Javanese. I use Javanese since I was kid. Now, I can speak other languages as well, but dominantly I use Javanese).

The respondents said that their first language was Javanese. As time went by, they also learnt other languages such as Indonesian and English. However, they still used Javanese dominantly in everyday life.

#### 2. Age

The second factor that was investigated was the influence of age. The researcher asked two questions. The first question was dealing with when did the respondent start learning English.

Respondent 08.14: "*Saya belajar Bahasa Inggris sejak di bangku Sekolah Dasar (SD). Saat saya SD, saya tidak hanya belajar di sekolah tapi saya mengambil les bahasa Inggris juga.*"

(I learnt English since I was in elementary school. I learnt it by taking English course and getting from the school).

Respondent 06.05: "*Saya belajar Bahasa Inggris mulai dari SD. Saya hanya belajar di sekolah tidak pernah ambil les Bahasa Inggris.*"

(I learnt English since I was in elementary school. I learnt it only at the school. I never take English course).

Respondent 06.09: "*Saya belajar Bahasa Inggris sejak kecil, tepatnya dari SD. Tapi saya tidak belajar Bahasa Inggris di sekolah, sebab tidak ada mata pelajaran tersebut waktu itu. Saya belajar Bahasa Inggris dari film.*"

(I learn English since I was in elementary school. I did not get it at the school. Otherwise, I learn it from movie).

All of respondent said that they learnt English started from elementary school. Most of them only learnt English at the school. They just followed the curriculum and what the teacher taught. In addition, some others learnt English not only at the school. They learn English by taking English course, watching movie, and memorizing vocabulary as well.

The second question was about when the respondents learn pronunciation.

Respondent 08.14: *“Saya belajar pelafalan Bahasa Inggris dari Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP). Tapi, ketika saya SD saya mengikuti les Bahasa Inggris yang fokus ke keterampilan berbicara. Jadi saya sudah belajar pelafalan melalui aktifitas berbicara di les-lesan tersebut. Saat saya di SMP, saya belajar pelafalan secara mandiri dengan cara mendengarkan music berulang kali dan mencoba untuk menyanyikan liriknya. Dari situ saya bisa lihat apakah saya bisa melafalkan liriknya secara benar atau tidak. Saya juga tetap belajar pelafalan ketika di SMA dan perguruan tinggi.*

(I learnt pronunciation since I was in Junior High School. However, when I was in Elementary school I took English that course that focus on speaking skill. I learnt pronunciation through speaking activities in that course. When I was in junior high school I began to learn pronunciation by myself by listening to music, repeating it, and trying to sing the song then I know whether or not I could pronounce the words. I continue learning pronunciation in senior high school as well as university).

Respondent 06.13: *“Saya belajar pelafalan di perguruan tinggi. Terutama dimulai sejak semester pertama dimana ada mata kuliah pelafalan. Itu membawa saya untuk belajar pelafalan lagi.”*

(I learn pronunciation at university. Specifically, it was started from the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. There was pronunciation subject. It brought me to learn pronunciation).

The respondents answer could be concluded into two major things. First, there respondents learn pronunciation directly and indirectly. At the university, they learn pronunciation directly by following pronunciation and phonetic subject. They did also learn pronunciation indirectly. Some of them learn it by watching videos, movies, listening to music first then repeat it by themselves. Second, the respondents' age of learning English pronunciation could be considered into two period of time. Some of them learn pronunciation since they were kid (in elementary school) and some others learn it when they getting older (high school or university).

### 3. Exposure

Exposure becomes another influential factor in acquiring pronunciation. To gain deeper information related with the learners' exposure to pronunciation, the researcher

asked 2 questions. The first question was “*Apakah anda juga belajar pelafalan di luar kelas?*” (Do you practice your pronunciation outside the class?).

Respondent 08.08: “*Iya, saya berlatih pelafalan dengan cara chat dan berbincang bersama teman-teman, dan juga terkadang berbicara kepada diri saya sendiri. Saya juga belajar lewat YouTube, film, dan music.*”

(Yes. I practice it by chatting and talking with my friends, talking to myself. I do also learn it though YouTube, film, and music).

Respondent 08.11: “*Saya jarang berlatih pelafalan, lebih fokus ketata bahasa.*”

(Not really, I focus more on grammar).

The respondents’ answer showed that most of them practiced their pronunciation outside the class. They practiced English pronunciation by utilizing YouTube, movie, and music. Several of them also had their own way to practice it by talking and chatting with their friends, and memorizing vocabulary. However, there were some respondents who did not really practice English pronunciation. They focus more on other language features such as grammar, vocabulary, and tenses.

The second question was “*Apakah anda menggunakan Bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan sehari-hari?*” (Do you use English in daily conversation?).

Respondent 08.14: “*Iya, di kantor saya menggunakan Bahasa Inggris untuk berkomunikasi dengan rekan saya. Kadang saya juga mencampur Bahasa.*”

(Yes. In the office I usually use full English with my partner. I do usually mix the languages).

Respondent 06.13: “*Tidak begitu, saya jarang menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam keseharian. Jika itu terjadi pun karena ketidak sengajaan.*”

(Not really, I rarely use English in daily conversation. If

After identifying the respondents’ answers, the researcher knew that half of them integrated English in their everyday life, but half other was not.

#### 4. Motivation

To investigate the respondents’ motivation on English pronunciation, the researcher asked two questions. The first question was “*Kenapa anda belajar Bahasa Inggris?*” (Why do you study English?).

Respondent 08.05: “*Karena peluang kerja yang lebih luas. Apalagi sekarang ini semua hal sudah terhubung dengan Bahasa Inggris. Jadi saya pikir itu keputusan bagus untuk mengambil Bahasa Inggris.*”

(English offers numerous jobs. Moreover, nowadays everything is connected with English. So, I think it’s a good decision to learn English).

Respondent 06.13: “*Sebenarnya belajar Bahasa Inggris bukan tujuan utama saya. Itu merupakan pilihan kedua bagi saya. Namun, setelah hasil tes keluar, ternyata saya diterima di Bahasa Inggris. Seiring berjalannya waktu*

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*saya mulai menyukai Bahasa Inggris dan ingin meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris saya.”*

(Actually, studying English is not my intended. English was my second option. However, the test result showed that I was accepted in my second option. As time went by, I begun to like English and want to improve my English skill as well).

The reasons why the respondents learnt English were various. Mostly, they learnt it because they like it. Besides, there were many other reasons as well. The respondents' answers can be categorized into two; those who have intention to study English, and those who study it unintentionally.

The second question was “*Apa motivasi anda belajar Bahasa Inggris?*” (What is your motivation leaning English?).

Respondent 08.08: “*Saya ingin seperti penutur asli di semua aspek Bahasa Inggris.*”

(I want to be as native as I can in all English skills).

Respondent 08.03: “*Untuk mendapat masa depan yang lebih baik termasuk pekerjaan, kari, dan pengalaman.*”

(To get better future, includes job, carrier, and experience).

The respondents' answers indicated that most of them want to have better future; having good job, carrier, and experiences. Besides, some of them also wanted to master English like a native, having good ability in all English skills and features.

Based on the data collected, the factors affected Javanese learners on English pronunciation could be explained in the following sections. There are four factors that affected EFL students' pronunciation. Those are first language, age, exposure, and motivation. All the respondents' first language was Javanese. They used Javanese since they were kid until now. As time went by they also learnt other languages such as Indonesian and English. However, they still used Javanese dominantly than other languages. In addition, most of them also learnt English started from elementary school, which meant before puberty. Although they had the same first language as well as started learning English in the same period, their pronunciation ability was different one to another. The reason why their pronunciation was different would be discussed.

First, respondents who had high score in pronunciation test. The respondents who had high score in pronunciation test encountered pronunciation difficulties less than others. The respondents learnt English and its pronunciation since they were in elementary school or before the puberty period. In the effort to have accurate pronunciation, the respondents also practice as well as use English in daily life. YouTube, music, and film are the media for them to practice their pronunciation. In addition, some of them also use English as tool for communication in daily life. Their motivation to learnt English was also higher. It was not only limited to have good job and carrier. They also expected themselves to be accepted in English environment as well as have many experiences in overseas. In conclusion, their personal goal influenced the need and desire to achieve correct pronunciation.

Second, the respondents who had medium score in pronunciation test. The difficulties that the respondents faced were more than the previous group. They learnt English and its pronunciation in different period of time. They learnt English since they were in elementary school or before the puberty period, but they learnt its pronunciation started at senior high school for some and at university for some others. This meant after the puberty period. The result of learning pronunciation after puberty period was the accent of the respondents' first language obviously exists. The interview result showed that there was a long gap between the time they learnt English and its pronunciation. During the gap the respondents rarely had pronunciation activities. Soon after they learnt pronunciation at university level, they tried to improve their pronunciation through music, YouTube, and movie. However, they did not really use English in daily life. Majority of the respondents who has medium score learnt English because they wanted to get good job and carrier.

Third, the respondents who had low score in pronunciation test. The low scored respondents were the group that faced the most pronunciation difficulties. The age factor showed that the respondents learnt English since they were in elementary school or before the puberty period. However, they learnt English pronunciation at university level, or after puberty. Thus, many pronunciation difficulties were faced by them. Their speech organs had been deeply implanted to produce the speech sounds of Javanese language. Thus, when they pronounce English words or sounds, rules and pattern of the Javanese language were transferred which then resulted in errors or pronunciation mistakes (Zhang, 2009: 43-44). The exposure factors explained that the respondents infrequently used English in daily life. Based on the interview result, they practice their pronunciation through YouTube, music, film, and novel. Nevertheless, they focused more on the content not the pronunciation. In addition, one of them said that she paid more attention on grammar than pronunciation. The motivation factor showed that the respondents had low motivation and did not have personal goals of studying English and its pronunciation. It made a sense since the respondents took English accidentally.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing pronunciation test and interview, the researcher draws three major points. 1) Javanese learners of English encountered difficulties in pronouncing 13 consonant sounds /ʒ, v, θ, ð, z, ʃ, f, g, k, d, tʃ, ŋ, j/ and 17 vowel sounds /æ, ə, i:, eɪ, aʊ, ə:, ɔ:, u:, ɒ, ɪə, əʊ, ʊ, ɑ:, ɪ, ʊə, ɔɪ, aɪ/. While the rest, 14 English sounds /p, b, t, s, h, dʒ, m, n, l, r, w, ʌ, ə, ε/ were clearly pronounced by the Javanese learners of English..2) The difficulties in term of sound substitution, deletion, first language interference, and monophthongized. 3) There are four factors that hinder Javanese in acquiring English pronunciation. They are age, first language, exposure, and motivation. These four factors are interrelated one and another. Since pronunciation is a crucial part in English speaking, it is needed for the future researcher to conduct research related to improve Javanese learners' English pronunciation.

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