

PHONOLOGICAL INTERFERENCE OF DAYAKESE TOWARD ENGLISH WORDS PRONUNCIATION

Sonia Pitaloka*

Magister of English Education, University of Palangka Raya

*soniapitaloka99@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aimed to explore the phonological interference made by Dayakese students in SMPN Satu Atap-1 Kamipang Regency in pronouncing English words, not only to know the types and most dominant type of phonological interference in students' pronunciation, but also to identify the strategies to avoid phonological interference of Dayakese toward English words pronunciation. This research employed descriptive qualitative research. The participants of this research were all of the students of SMPN Satu Atap-1 Kamipang Regency, therefore this research applied total population sampling. Three instruments such as pronunciation test, observation, and interview were used in this research. The result showed that phonological interference in this research happened in all three categories: sound addition, sound omission, and sound replacement, but mostly it happened in sound replacement category as many as 305 phonological interferences made by the students. This showed that most of the students tend to replace the phoneme they could not pronounce appropriately according to standardized English pronunciation. Even though several phonemes did not exist in Dayakese, the students could pronounce some of them properly because the students were familiar with those sounds, such as consonants /f/, /v/, /z/, /ʒ/, and diphthong /ʊə/. As in the classroom, the words which consisted of those sounds were often used. Besides, the phonemes which caused phonological interference for most of Dayakese students based on this research were consonants /θ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /ð/, vowels /ə/, /æ/, and diphthongs /ɪə/, /əʊ/, /eə/. several strategies used by students were repeat pronouncing, students' correction, re-reading the text, read slowly, asking frequently, and paying attention to the teacher. However, the teacher also applied several strategies to overcome this issue: 1) Encouraging the students to practice by keeping them actively involved in class activities such as reading aloud in front of the class; 2) Correcting students' error pronunciation after they finished reading a text; and 3) Repeat pronouncing to give the example to the students on how to pronounce the words.

Keywords: Phonological Interference, Dayakese, Students' English Words Pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

Interference, a key concept in the field of Sociolinguistics, refers to the negative transfer from a learner's first language (L1) to their second language (L2), resulting in errors or inappropriate forms in the target language. This phenomenon, also known as language interference, generally occurs because language learners adapt a linguistic system that differs from their native language. Interference is often considered a failure in language acquisition, manifesting as the inability of learners to speak the target language

appropriately. This issue is especially prevalent in multilingual cultures where various languages coexist and influence each other. Individuals who speak more than one language frequently encounter interference problems.

The term "interference" was first introduced by Weinreich to describe systematic changes in a language. For instance, an English language learner might produce incorrect tense constructions because their native language does not differentiate between tense patterns in the same way

English does. According to Rumalutur et al. (2021), interference occurs when comprehension of one language hinders understanding of another. This is similar to Onyinye's (2019) explanation that one expresses language interference when one's grasp of one language affects their understanding of another.

Phonological interference, a specific type of interference, occurs when a language user applies phonetic elements such as vowels or sounds from their native language while speaking the target language. For example, foreign language learners often struggle to distinguish between similar sounds in the target language, influenced by the phonetics of their mother tongue. This research investigates the phonological interference of the Dayakese language on English pronunciation, particularly focusing on the speakers' articulation of sounds like /v/ and /θ/. Dayakese speakers, for instance, might pronounce "very" (/ˈvɛri/) as /pəri/ and "thing" (/θɪŋ/) as /tɪŋ/ because the sounds /v/ and /θ/ do not exist in their local language.

In Kamipang Regency, the Dayakese language (specifically Ngaju Dayakese) is predominantly spoken. Observations at SMPN Satu Atap-1 Kamipang Regency reveal that students often exhibit interference when pronouncing English words. For example, they might pronounce "own" (/oʊn/) as /on/. This negative phonological transfer reflects the influence of their native dialect on their English speaking.

Phonological interference can occur in several forms. Siqoyah and Latifah (2020) identify three types of phonological interference: assimilation, deletion, and insertion. Muhassin et al. (2018) categorizes phonological interference into sound addition, sound omission, and sound replacement.

Sound Addition

In this type, an extra sound is added to the word. For example, the addition of the phoneme /k/ in the pronunciation of "knife" (/naɪf/) becomes /knaɪf/. This is incorrect according to standard English phonetic rules,

where the /k/ at the beginning of the word is silent.

Sound Omission

This type involves omitting a sound that should be pronounced. For example, the word "horn" (/hɔrn/) might be pronounced as /hɔn/, omitting the phoneme /r/.

Sound Replacement

Sound replacement occurs when a sound in the English pronunciation is substituted with another. For example, the phoneme /ɔ/ in "tall" (/tɔl/) might be replaced with /ʌ/, resulting in /tʌl/, which is incorrect according to standard English pronunciation.

This research focuses on the phonological interference of Dayakese speakers and the resultant errors in English pronunciation, aiming to shed light on how native dialects affect language acquisition and speaking abilities in multilingual contexts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed descriptive qualitative research. The participants of this research were all of the students of SMPN Satu Atap-1 Kamipang Regency, therefore this research applied total population sampling. Three instruments such as pronunciation test, observation, and interview were used in this research to collect the data needed about students' phonological interference of Dayakese toward English words pronunciation and the strategies to avoid this issue. Phonetic transcriptions used in this research are British transcriptions using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

305 phonological interferences in sound replacement category were made, 26 phonological interferences in sound omission category, and 41 phonological interferences in sound addition category. Most of the students made interference in sound replacement category. This showed that most of the students tend to replace the phoneme they

could not pronounce appropriately according to standardized English pronunciation.

The words they, turn, think, and work were the most frequent phonological interference made by the students. For the words they /ðei/ and think /θɪŋk/, the students could not pronounce the phoneme /ð/ and /θ/. Most of the students replaced the phoneme /ð/ with /d/ and phoneme /θ/ with /t/, not only because they were not familiar with the sound /ð/ and /θ/ in the words they and think but also because they did not have those sounds in their language system.

Table 1. Phonological Interference in Respondents' Transcriptions

Words	IPA Transcription	Respondents Transcription	Types of Phonological Interference
They	/ðei/	/dei/	Replaced phoneme /ð/ become /d/
		/tu.n/	Replaced phoneme /s:/ become /u:/
Turn	/tɜ:n/	/tru.n/	Added phoneme /r/ and Replaced phoneme /s:/ become /u:/
		/tu.r/	Added phoneme /r/, Omitted phoneme /n/, and Replaced phoneme /s:/ become /u:/
Think	/θɪŋk/	/tɪŋ/	Omitted phoneme /k/ and Replaced phoneme /θ/ become /t/
Work	/wɜ:k/	/wɔ:k/	Replaced phoneme /s:/ become /ɔ:/

Several students omitted the phoneme /k/ when pronouncing the word think. For the words turn /tɜ:n/ and work /wɜ:k/, the students had difficulties in pronouncing the sound /ɜ:/, not only because the vowel /ɜ:/ did not exist in their language system, but also because the vowel /ɜ:/ was a middle sound of the word turn and work. Whereas, from the class observation, the students got no problem in pronouncing the word her which had the vowel /ɜ:/ at the end of the word because they were familiar with the word.

Other than those four words, the students made frequent phonological interference for the words breathe, choose, cow, apple, laugh, wash, and how. For the word breathe /bri:ð/, several students replaced vowel /i:/ with /e/, a few students also replaced consonant /ð/ with /t/, /dʒ/, and /d/. For the word choose /tʃu:z/, several students had difficulty in pronouncing consonant /z/, they tend to replace it with consonant /s/ and /ʃ/, others had difficulty in pronouncing consonant /tʃ/ that they replaced it with consonant /k/, some of them also replaced

vowel /u:/ with /ʊ/. For the word cow /kaʊ/, several students replaced diphthong /aʊ/ with /əʊ/. For the word apple /'æpl/, several students had difficulty in pronouncing vowel /æ/ that they replaced it with vowel /ʌ/, a few students replaced vowel /æ/ with /eɪ/ and /e/. Several students also added vowel /e/ before and after consonant /l/. For the word laugh /lɑ:f/, several students replaced vowel /ɑ:/ with /ɔ:/ and a few replaced it with diphthong /aʊ/. For the word wash /wɒʃ/, several students replaced vowel /ɒ/ with /ʌ/ and consonant /ʃ/ become /s/. For the word how /haʊ/, the students replaced diphthong /aʊ/ with /əʊ/

Table 2. Phonological Interference in Respondents' Transcriptions

Words	IPA Transcription	Respondents Transcription	Types of Phonological Interference
Breathe	/bri:ð/	/bret/	Replaced phoneme /i:/ become /e/, and phoneme /ð/ become /t/
		/bri:t/	Replaced phoneme /ð/ become /t/
Choose	/tʃu:z/	/tʃʊs/	Replaced phoneme /u:/ become /ʊ/, and phoneme /z/ become /s/
		/ku:z/	Replaced phoneme /tʃ/ become /k/
Cow	/kaʊ/	/kəʊ/	Added phoneme /w/ and Replaced diphthong /aʊ/ become /əʊ/
		/ʌpl/	Replaced phoneme /æ/ become /ʌ/
Apple	/'æpl/	/ʌple/	Added phoneme /e/ and Replaced phoneme /æ/ become /ʌ/
		/lɑ:t/	Replaced /ɑ:/ become /ɔ:/
Laugh	/lɑ:f/	/laʊg/	Replaced phoneme /ɑ:/ become diphthong /aʊ/, and phoneme /f/ become /g/
		/wɒʃ/	Replaced phoneme /ʃ/ become /s/
Wash	/wɒʃ/	/wʌʃ/	Replaced phoneme /ɒ/ become /ʌ/
		/həʊ/	Replaced diphthong /aʊ/ become /əʊ/
How	/haʊ/	/həʊ/	Replaced diphthong /aʊ/ become /əʊ/

Participants' behaviour were observed and noted down by the researcher who was engaged in classroom activities. Based on the observation in the classroom, strategies used by the students were as follows: the students repeated teacher's pronunciation; the students corrected each other's pronunciation; the students re-read the text over and over again; the students read the text slowly to make sure they did not make any mistake; the students actively asked the teacher how to pronounce certain words; and the students paid attention to the teacher on how to pronounce the English words.

Based on the result of the interview with the English teacher of SMPN Satu Atap-1

Kamipang Regency, Dayakese was rarely spoken in the classroom, but still it affected the students' pronunciation. Their word pronunciations were interfered with other sounds of their mother tongue, as for the word "singer" /'sɪŋər/, the students pronounced it as /'sɪŋer/, since Dayakese has two allophones in phoneme /ɛ/ and they frequently used /e/ sound instead of /ə/ sound.

Other factors that affect students' pronunciation according to the teacher were lack of motivation and pronunciation practice. Oftentimes, students could feel less motivated, and that affected their performance in the learning process. In this case, it caused pronunciation interference. However, the teacher applied several strategies to overcome this issue, such as encouraging the students to practice by keeping them actively involved in class activities like reading aloud in front of the class, correcting students' error pronunciation after they finished reading a text, and repeating pronunciation to give an example to the students on how to pronounce the words correctly.

Discussion

The study's findings on phonological interference among Dayakese students align with and diverge from various previous studies on similar themes. One significant point of comparison is the types of phonological interference identified. The research revealed that sound replacement was the most common type of phonological interference, followed by sound omission and sound addition. This categorization matches the framework proposed by Muhassin et al. (2018). However, other studies, such as Siqoyah and Latifah (2020), found assimilation to be a prevalent type of interference among Javanese learners, illustrating that different native languages influence interference patterns differently.

The specific phonemes causing difficulties also resonate with findings from other research. For instance, Onyinye (2019) reported that learners often struggle with English phonemes absent in their native language. In this study, consonants like /θ/, /ð/,

/ʃ/, and /tʃ/, along with vowels /ə/, /æ/, and diphthongs /ɪə/, /əʊ/, /eə/, were the most problematic for Dayakese students. This pattern is consistent with Rumalutur et al. (2021), who also noted these phonemes as challenging for learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The recurrent difficulties with these specific phonemes across different studies underscore the necessity for focused pronunciation practice in these areas for learners from various L1 backgrounds.

The strategies to overcome phonological interference identified in this research, such as repeated pronunciation, peer correction, and frequent questioning by students, along with active practice, immediate correction, and modeling correct pronunciation by teachers, reflect effective methods noted in previous studies. Siqoyah and Latifah (2020) emphasized the importance of active engagement and corrective feedback in overcoming phonological interference. This study additionally highlights the roles of classroom language use and student motivation, aspects less emphasized in other studies, suggesting that a holistic approach considering both linguistic practice and socio-psychological factors may be more effective in addressing phonological interference.

Contrasting these findings with previous studies reveals differences that further the understanding of phonological interference. While this study identified sound replacement as the most frequent interference, Siqoyah and Latifah (2020) found assimilation more prevalent among Javanese learners. This contrast points to the influence of native language phonological structures on the type of interference experienced. Moreover, the effectiveness of intervention strategies can vary based on learners' linguistic backgrounds and learning environments. While peer correction and repeated practice were beneficial for Dayakese students in this study, Onyinye (2019) highlighted the success of multimedia-assisted pronunciation training for Nigerian learners, suggesting that diverse, tailored teaching aids can enhance pronunciation accuracy.

This study uniquely emphasizes cultural and contextual factors, such as the infrequent use of Dayakese in the classroom and its impact on pronunciation, an aspect less explored in other studies. This highlights the need for further research on how socio-linguistic environments and cultural practices influence language learning and phonological interference. The insights gained from this research, combined with findings from previous studies, underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to teaching pronunciation that addresses both linguistic challenges and socio-psychological factors.

CONCLUSION

The students made interference in all three categories of phonological interference, but mostly it happened in sound replacement category. This showed that most of the students tend to replace the phoneme they could not pronounce. This phonological interference happened not only because several phonemes in English were not available in Dayakese, but also because there are many words the students were unfamiliar with that caused them pronouncing the words similar to what it is written. Hence, the main problem of the occurrence of Dayakese students' phonological interference was because the students were lack of pronunciation practice. It was proven by some of the phonemes that could be easily pronounced by the students regardless the absence of those sounds in their language system, such as consonants /f/, /v/, /z/, /ʒ/, and diphthong /ʊə/. The students could pronounce those sounds because they were familiar with them, as in the classroom, the words which consisted of those sounds were often used, such as fine, very, zoo, television and flower. Besides, the phonemes which caused phonological interference for most of Dayakese students based on this research were consonants /θ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /ð/, vowels /ə/, /æ/, and diphthongs /ɪə/, /əʊ/, /eə/.

REFERENCES

- Alfansyah, E., Rahmat, H., and Ribahan, R. (2020). Phonological Interference in Pronouncing English Sounds among Lombok's Senior High School Students. *ELITE Journal*, 5(2), 485-496.
- Astuty, A.D. (2022). Phonological Interferences in the English of Buginese Students. *International Journal of Research on English Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 53-61.
- Muhassin, M., Ansar, F.A., and Putri, P.P. (2018). Phonological Interference of Madurese Towards English at the Eleventh Students of SMA Al Hikam Bangkalan East Java. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, 11(2), 144-159.
- Noviyenty, L., and Putri, M.I. (2021). Mother Tongue Interference Towards Students' English Pronunciation: A Case Study in IAIN Curup. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*.
- Onyinye, A.F. (2019). Influence of Mother Tongue Interference.
- Putri, I., Daulay, S., and Lubis, M. (2019). Phonological Interference and Morphology of BMT in Student Narrative Essays, Indonesia. *Budapest International Research and Critics in Linguistics and Education (BirLE) Journal*, 2(1), 61-71.
- Rumalutur, A., Anaktototy, K., and Pattiasina, P. J. (2021). Assessing the Interference of Mother Tongue Towards Students' Spoken English Ability at SMPN 39 SBT. *MATAI International Journal of Language Education*, 2(1), 11-21.
- Santoso, D.M., Tandang, and Sofyan, D. (1991). *Struktur Bahasa Dayak Ngaju*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Siqoyah, S., and Latifah, N. (2020). Javanese Phonological Interference in English Pronunciation of English Literature

Department Students. *Humanities across Histories and Trajectories in the Glocal Contexts*.

- Syarifah, A.L. (2017). Phonological Interference in the Spoken English Performed by Javanese Speaker in Teaching Process of “Mind Your Language Video”.
- Utami, D.H., Wello, B., and Atmowardoyo, H. (2017). The Phonological Interference of Students’ First Language in Pronouncing English Sounds (A Case Study on Buginese and Makassarese Students). *ELT Worldwide*, 4(2), 206-212.
- Yanti, N.M.W. (2022). Balinese Phonological Interference in English Pronunciation by Denpasar People. *J-Lalite: Journal of English Studies*, 3(1), 17-27.
- Yunanda, F. (2019). The Interference of Some English Words to Indonesian User. *ELT (English Language Teaching Prima Journal)*, 1(1).