THE OUTCOME OF LANGUAGE CONTACT: MADURESE LEARNERS PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH

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Abstract

This study aims to find out whether it is the phenomenon of language contact that affects the pronunciation of Madurese learners who learn English in a community called Curahdami English Community (CEC). They are twelve (12) Madurese learners who belong to the community. The club was first funded by DIKTI through PKM (Program Kreativitas Mahasiswa) that the researcher proposed. It has been three years since then. This study found that problems of pronunciation performed by the learners are the same in several sounds; suggesting that native language is in fact the very influential factor. In addition, several sounds interfered by Madurese lead to unintelligible pronunciation, which might cause misunderstanding when occurred in a real communication. The unintelligible sounds mostly found in the vowel sounds. However, there are more sounds, than the unintelligible ones, which are still considered intelligible despite the two different dialects interference on the pronunciation.

Key words: pronunciation, sound, language contact

Abstrak

Penlitian ini bertujuan menemukan apakah benar bahwa fenomena kontak bahasa yang mempengaruhi pelafalan pelajar Madura yang mempelajari bahasa Inggris di sebuah komunitas bernama Curahdami English Community (CEC). Terdapat 12 pelajar Madura yang ada dalam komunitas tersebut. Klub tersebut pertama-tama didanai oleh DIKTI melalui PKM (Program Kreativitas Mahasiswa) yang diinisiasi oleh peneliti tiga tahun yang lalu. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa permasalahan pada pelafalan yang dilakukan oleh para pelajar Madura tersebut sama dalam beberapa bunyi, yang mengarahkan bahwa bahasa asli pada faktanya merupakan faktor yang sangat berpengaruh. Selain itu, beberapa bunyi terganggu oleh bahasa Madura yang membuat pelafalan tidak dapat dimengerti yang mungkin menyebabkan terjadinya kesalahpahaman dalam komunikasi yang nyata. Bunyi-bunyi yang tidak dapat dimengerti tersebut kebanyakan ditemukan berupa bunyi vokal. Namun sebenarnya ada banyak bunyi lain selain yang tidka dapat dimengerti tadi, yang dirasa dapat dimengerti terlepas dari gangguan dua dialek berbeda dalam pelafalan.

Kata kunci: pelafalan, bunyi, kontak bahasa

I. INTRODUCTION

Incorrect pronunciation not only often prevents the understanding of a message, but also can adversely affect the listeners' judgment. All too often bad pronunciation might be perceived as a lack of 'competence' since the way we speak immediately conveys something about ourselves to the people around us (Yates, 2002). More importantly, Yates & Zielinski (2009) argue that learners with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect. Even though this is true that to become competent users of English, learners must focus on its various different

aspects such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

However, foreign language learning tends to emphasize the importance of grammar and vocabulary, and causes other aspects to be neglected (Harmer, 2001, p. 183; Backley, 2015). Those being neglected are particularly the practical skills that allow learners to use the language for real communication (e.g. pronunciation). Therefore, it is common to find learners of English who have an extensive knowledge but lack the ability or confidence to use spoken English. Pronunciation, therefore, is considered one of complicated aspects for most EFL learners, Indonesian learners in particular (Menard, 2010). Indeed, this is true that learning pronunciation does not aim to sound exactly like a native speaker of English, but it does aim to be intelligible, meaning the pronunciation is clear enough to be understood. To some Indonesian learners there are English sounds they consider difficult to produce that sometimes lead to unintelligibility (Mathew, 1997).

This study aims to find out whether it is the phenomenon of language contact that affects the pronunciation of Madurese learners who learn English in a community called Curahdami English Community (CEC). They are twelve (12) Madurese learners who belong to the community. CEC is a study club of English learners from various levels of education in a village named Curahdami in Jember, East Java, where the researcher lives. The researcher is the founder of the club and one of the tutors in the club. The club was first funded by DIKTI through PKM (Program Kreativitas Mahasiswa) that the researcher proposed. It has been three years since then.

The twelve learners are in the same level of school and are in the same class in the community. They were chosen considering the length of learning English and having no difficulty recognizing English alphabets. They come from Madurese family who speak Madurese as their native language and study in either public or private Senior High Schools in Jember. They were male and female of Madurese. They are around fourteen (15) to eighteen (18) years old when involved in this study. This study convinces that native language is the most influential factor on one's pronunciation (Kenworthy, 1987). More importantly, the result of the study would facilitate teachers to improve learners' pronunciation ability by recognizing the learners' native language sounds interference and emphasizing on the difficult sounds learners might encounter.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning (Yates, 2002). The following captures explain the influential factors in pronunciation and goals of learning pronunciation. Regarding learners' pronunciation, native language is the most influential factor (Kenworthy, 1987). Further, it is stated that if learners are familiar with the sound system of their native language, they will be able to effectively diagnose their own difficulties. Other factors are such as age, experience in studying English, phonetic ability, attitude and identity, and motivation and concern for good pronunciation (Khamkhien, 2010).

Learning English pronunciation is not learning to sound perfectly like a native speaker. It is learning to have intelligible pronunciation (Backley, 2015). In other words, 'good' pronunciation does not mean 'native-like' pronunciation, but it does mean to be intelligible. **Intelligibility** means the ability to use pronunciation which is good enough for them to be always understood (Harmer, 2001, p. 184). Backley (2015) also defines intelligibility as 'listener-friendly' pronunciation-one which listeners can understand without effort and which can be used to make meaningful conversation possible. While Field (2005) says intelligibility refers to the

extent to which the acoustic-phonetic content of the message is recognizable by a listener.

Regarding intelligibility, there are two features of pronunciation to be considered; *segmental* and *suprasegmental*. Segmental features include phonemes (the particular sound of a language), while suprasegmental includes word stress, rhythm, intonation, etc. (Yates, 2002). The present study focuses on segmental features since the research is regarding native language sounds that interfere English pronunciation. Segmental features (phonemes) comprise consonants and vowels (Kelly, 2000, p. 1). Further, consonants are divided into voiced and voiceless, while vowels are single vowels (short and long) and diphthongs.

English has 44 sounds consisting of 12 (monophthongs) vowel sounds, 24 consonant sounds and 8 diphthongs. Each sound has its phonetic symbol. However, English has only 26 alphabets in written. Therefore, an English alphabet might have more than a sound. For instance, vowel 'a' in words such as 'hat', 'tar', 'wash' and 'hate' sounds different; it sounds /æ/ in 'hat, /ɑ:/ in 'tar', /ɒ/ in 'wash' and /eɪ/ in 'hate'. However, Indonesian has consistent sound of each alphabet. This is to say that an alphabet has only a sound which is in fact pronounced the same when existing in different words.

Vowel sounds are all voiced. They and may be single known as *monophthongs* (like /e/ as in let), or a combination involving a movement from one vowel sound to another (like /eɪ/ in late); such combinations are known as **diphthongs** (Kelly, 2000, p. 2). There is also an additional term called *triphthongs* describing the combination of three vowel sounds (like /aʊə/ in power). Monophthongs maybe short or long. The symbol /:/ indicates a long sound.

Table 2.1 English Vowel Sounds

	Monophthongs	
	Short	Long
1.	/i/	**/i:/**
2.	**/ɪ/**	
3.	/e/	
4.	**/æ/**	
5.	**/ə/**	
6.		**/ɜ:/**
7.	**/ʌ/**	
8.		/ɑ:/
9.	/ɒ/	
10.		/ɔ:/
11.	/ʊ/	
12.	/u/	**/u**:/

	Diphthongs
1.	/aɪ/
2.	/eɪ/
3.	/ɔɪ/
4.	/aʊ/
5.	/əʊ/
6.	/ɪə/
7.	/eə/
8.	/ʊə/

Consonant sounds maybe voiced or unvoiced. It is possible to identify many pairs of consonants which are essentially the same except for the element of voicing (for example /f/ as in fan, and /v/ as in van (Kelly, 2000, p. 2).

Table 2.2 English Consonant Sounds

Consonants			
1.	/p/	13.	/ð/
2.	/b/	14.	/s/
3.	/t/	15.	/z/
4.	/d/	16.	/ʃ/
5.	/k/	17.	/ʒ/
6.	/g/	18.	/h/
7.	/m/	19.	/tʃ/
8.	/n/	20.	/dʒ/
9.	/ŋ/	21.	/w/
10.	/f/	22.	/r/
11.	/v/	23.	/j/
12.	/θ/	24.	/l/

Language Contact

In today's world, most societies are multilingual. There is a term called 'language contact', when speakers from

two speech communities are in contact with each other. 'Language contact' occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages influence each other (Matras, 2009). Languages can come into contact in a myriad of ways. "Basically there are two types: the first is direct contact in which speakers of one language turn up in the midst of speakers of another (because of invasion, expulsion, emigration, etc.), the second is where the contact is through the mediation of literature or nowadays television, radio or the internet (i.e. indirect contact)" (Hickey, 2010).

The outcomes of language contact can be seen through phonology (sound systems), morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure), and lexical semantics (Thomason, 2001). Phonology (sound system) is the one this study will analyze dealing with the learners' pronunciation. Phonological interference or transfer would appear likely that farther along in the contact history, in the process of acquiring bilingual competence, the version of the second language spoken by such people would still contain many

phonological features derivable from their native language, i.e. substratum phonological influence (Sankoff, 2001). Hickey (2010) is in line with that by arguing, "Everyone tends to speak a second language with an accent as any new language is learned on the basis of one first and native langauge".

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are discussed into three main points with relation to the research questions, namely English Sounds Produced by Madurese learners, Unintelligible Pronunciation, and Language Contact.

Examples of English Sounds Produced by Madurese learners

Twelve (12) Indonesian learners were assigned to pronounce a list of English words and read an English passage. The findings were given in a table as follows:

Table 4.1. Monophthong Vowels

	Monophthongs		English words	Madurese
	Short	Long		
1.	/i/	/**iː**/	Beat	/i/
2.	/**ɪ**/		hit	/i/
3.	/e/		left	
4.	/**æ**/		hat	/e/
5.	/ə/		about	
6.		/**ɜ**ː/	shirt	
7.	/**ʌ**/		run	
8.		/ɑː/	far	/**ʌ**/
9.	/**ɒ**/		dog	
10.		/ɔː/	call	/**ɒ**/
11.	/**ʊ**/		book	
12.	/u/	/**uː**/	food	/**ʊ**/

Table 4.2. Diphthong Vowels

	Diphthongs	English words	Madurese
13.	/aɪ/	high, smile, tie	
14.	/eɪ/	cake, pain, brain	/e/
15.	/ɔɪ/	toy, boy, enjoy	
16.	/aʊ/	house, mouth, town	

17.	/əʊ/	go, so, hope	
18.	/ɪə/	beer, fear, fierce	
19.	/eə/	where, air, stairs	/e/
20.	/ʊə/	fewer, fury	**/u:/**

The twelve Madurese learners erroneously pronounce several vowel sounds of both Monophthongs and diphthongs. Most of Monophthongs erroneously pronounced are the sounds /æ/, **/ɑ:/**, /ɔ:/ and /u:/. The sound /æ/ in 'hat' was pronounced /e/ as in 'left', **/ɑ:/** as in 'far' was pronounced /ʌ/ as in 'run', /ɔ:/ as in

'call' was pronounced similarly as /ɒ/ in 'dog', and /u:/ as in 'food' was like /ʊ/ in 'book'. Moreover, several diphthongs are /eə/ and /ʊə/. They pronounced the sounds /eə/ as /e/ and /ʊə/ as /u:/.

Table 4.3. Consonants

Consonant		Examples of English Words	Madurese
21.	/p/	**p**ile, a**pp**le, ca**p**	
22.	/b/	**b**ile, so**bb**ing, ca**b**	Final /b/ as /p/
23.	/t/	**t**rain, ca**tt**le, s**t**art, ca**t**	
24.	/d/	**d**rain, ca**d**, a**dd**ress, love**d**	Final /d/ as /t/
25.	/k/	**c**ot, ha**ck**, **k**i**ck**, a**c**ross, in**k**	
26.	/g/	**g**ot, **g**i**gg**le, **g**ain, mu**g**	Final /g/ as /k/
27.	/m/	**m**ale, thu**mb**, re**m**e**m**ber, hi**m**	
28.	/n/	**n**ice, **kn**ee, **n**a**nn**y, re**n**ew, **kn**ew, **n**o	
29.	/ŋ/	ra**ng**, si**ng**ing, wro**ng**, tha**n**k, to**ng**ue	
30.	/f/	o**ff**, o**ff**er, sa**f**e, enou**gh**, **ph**iloso**ph**y,	
31.	/v/	o**f**, o**v**er, sa**v**e, **v**i**v**acity, in**v**ent	/f/
32.	/θ/	ba**th**, clo**th**s, **th**ing, plin**th**, **th**rust	/t/
33.	/ð/	ba**the**, **the**, wea**the**r, wi**th**, **th**at	/t/
34.	/s/	**s**ing, hi**ss**, lo**ss**, **s**i**s**ter**s**, **sc**ience, mi**s**t	
35.	/z/	**z**ing, hi**s**, lo**s**e, si**s**ter**s**, **z**ebra, la**z**y	
36.	/ʃ/	**sh**oes, wa**sh**, **s**ugar, ma**ch**ine, pa**t**ient	/s/
37.	/ʒ/	vi**s**ion, deci**s**ion, u**s**ually, plea**s**ure	/s/
38.	/h/	**h**at, a**h**ead, **h**ow, **wh**o, **wh**ose, **wh**ole	
39.	/tʃ/	**ch**ild, ke**tch**up, whi**ch**, pi**ct**ure.	
40.	/dʒ/	en**j**oy, **j**uicy, **j**u**dge**, a**ge**, he**dge**	
41.	/w/	**o**ne, **w**ill, s**w**ine t**w**in, q**u**ite, **w**hen	
42.	/r/	**wr**ite, **wr**ong, ca**rr**ier, ve**r**y, t**r**ill	
43.	/j/	**y**awn, **y**ears, **y**es, **u**se, **u**niform	
44.	/l/	**l**ucid, **cl**ear**l**y, mi**ll**er, mi**ll**, britt**le**	

Dealing with consonants, Madurese learners have some pronunciation errors as shown in the table. This can be seen as the errors of Indonesian learners in general, since Indonesian is their official language. Most of the learners found consonant sounds /θ/ and /ð/ difficult. Instead of pronouncing the consonant /θ/ as in 'thing' and /ð/ as in 'that', they pronounce /θ/ as /t/ and /ð/ as /d/. Moreover, other consonants

they pronounce erroneously are final /b/, final /d/ (by mostly Madurese), final /g/, /v/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. Final /b/ is erroneously pronounced as /p/, final/g/ as /k/, /v/ as /f/ and both /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ as /s/.

Unintelligible Pronunciation

As explained previously that the goal of learning pronunciation is not to sound like a native speaker, though it is good to be. Instead, learning pronunciation should aim to sound intelligible. Intelligible

pronunciation is 'listener-friendly' pronunciation-one which listeners can understand without effort and which can be used to make meaningful conversation possible (Backley, 2015). This is to say that when a listener (e.g. native or other speakers) hardly understands one's pronunciation, his pronunciation is unintelligible.

With regard to Madurese learners' pronunciation of English, the errors found as a result of the two dialects' interference need to be analyzed in terms of the intelligibility. As the study has found that Madurese pronounce erroneously some vowels and consonants, the way to analyze the intelligibility is by identifying the errors as to whether their pronunciation errors are still 'understood' or 'unintelligible' already. The analysis was based on the result of the learners' pronouncing a list of words and reading a passage.

Regarding vowels, the researcher found some sounds pronounced by the learners unintelligible. This can be identified from a sentence like *the King wanted everyone to feel his pain*. Most of the learners pronounce the vowel sound in the word 'pain' as /e/ that makes it sound like 'pen'. Other example is in the sentence *immediately, the King's servant put the hat on his head*. This is interesting since the word 'hat' and 'head' are pronounced exactly the same by either Madurese. A more interesting finding was the word 'hate' appeared in the list and in some sentences of the passage pronounce by most Madurese similarly as 'had', 'head' and even 'hat'. In some contexts, such pronunciation errors will lead to unintelligibility.

Regarding consonants, moreover, several sounds are also found intelligibly pronounced by the learners. They are mostly in the final consonant sounds such as the final /b/ and /p/ in the words 'cab' and 'cap'. However, the cases of unintelligibility in the vowels are more commonly found.

All in all, unintelligibility in the learners' pronunciation is found in some cases. Comparing to the intelligibility of the other sounds, however, the unintelligibility is very few encountered. In other words, their errors do not often lead to unintelligibility.

Language Contact

One of the outcomes of language contact can be seen through phonology (sound systems) (Thomason, 2001). Phonology (sound system) is the one this study will analyze dealing with the learners' pronunciation. Phonological interference or transfer would appear likely that farther along in the contact history, in the process of acquiring bilingual competence, the version of the second language spoken by such people would still contain many phonological features derivable from their native language, i.e. substratum phonological influence (Sankoff, 2001). Therefore, the case of language contact influence on the learners' pronunciations can be seen from several sounds which they pronounce erroneously as the interference from their native language.

IV. CONCLUSION

Problems of pronunciation performed by the learners are the same in several sounds; suggesting that native language is in fact the very influential factor. In addition, several sounds interfered by Madurese lead to unintelligible pronunciation, which might cause misunderstanding when occurred in a real communication. The unintelligible sounds mostly found in the vowel sounds. However, there are more sounds, than the unintelligible ones, which are still considered intelligible despite the two different dialects interference on the pronunciation. Finally, with regard to the result of the study, the study concludes that it is the outcome of language contact that the learners' pronunciation is much interfered by their native language.

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