Phonological Challenges and Error Patterns in English Consonant Production by Indonesian Learners: A Literature Review

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Abstract*. This study aims to provide insights into the specific difficulties encountered by Indonesian learners. This study used literature review to explore the phonological challenges and error patterns faced by Indonesian learners in English consonant production. The findings reveal that Indonesian learners often make substitution errors, replacing English consonants with sounds from their native language that are more familiar to them. Additionally, voicing errors, difficulties with consonant clusters, struggles with fricative consonants, and challenges related to stress and rhythm patterns are identified as common issues. These errors and difficulties are influenced by the phonetic patterns and structures of the Indonesian language.*

Keywords*: Phonology, English Consonant, Error Consonant*

INTRODUCTION

English language acquisition has sparked considerable interest and research, particularly in terms of the difficulties encountered by learners from various linguistic backgrounds. Non-native speakers have a particularly difficult time producing English consonants correctly (Long, 2017). Indonesian speakers have emerged as a distinct subgroup among these students, dealing with specific phonological challenges when learning English pronunciation. It is necessary to review the existing literature on this topic in order to fully comprehend the nature of these challenges and the patterns of errors displayed by Indonesian learners. As a result, this paper presents a literature review that delves into the phonological challenges and error patterns in Indonesian learners' English consonant production.

Consonants are speech sounds made by partially or completely blocking airflow in the vocal tract. They are distinguished by the presence of constriction or closure at various points of articulation in the mouth, throat, or nasal passage (Collins et al., 2019). Consonants, unlike vowels, frequently necessitate coordination and interaction between various articulatory organs such as the lips, teeth, tongue, and vocal cords (Reetz & Jongman, 2020). Consonants are essential building blocks of syllables and words in language, contributing to the formation of meaningful sounds and facilitating communication. They can differ in terms of voicing, place of articulation, manner of articulation, and other phonetic features, resulting in the wide variety of consonant sounds found in different languages (Yule, 2010).

Significant attention has been paid to English phonetics and pronunciation in the field of second language acquisition, recognizing the importance of consonant accuracy in overall intelligibility. However, it is critical to recognize the unique challenges that Indonesian learners face because their native language has distinct phonological features that can impede the acquisition of certain English consonant sounds. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive analysis of existing research, identifying the specific phonological challenges faced by Indonesian learners and examining the recurring error patterns observed in their English consonant production. Educators, linguists, and language learning practitioners can gain valuable insights into designing effective pedagogical strategies to address the needs of Indonesian learners and improve their English pronunciation skills by consolidating this knowledge.

In summary, the purpose of this literature review is to investigate the phonological challenges and error patterns in Indonesian learners' English consonant production. It aims to shed light on the distinct challenges faced by this specific learner group by examining existing research, contributing to the broader field of second language acquisition and facilitating the development of targeted instructional approaches to improve English pronunciation proficiency among Indonesian learners.

RESEARCH METHOD

A literature review was conducted to investigate Indonesian learners' errors in pronouncing English consonants. The selected articles have been analyzed in order to extract pertinent information. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of Indonesian learners' errors in pronouncing English consonants.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Substitution Errors

The study discovered that Indonesian English learners may make substitution errors when producing English consonant sounds. This means that instead of producing the intended English consonant correctly, they may substitute a similar sound from their native Indonesian language (Inayatul, 2023)

For example, Indonesian students may replace the English consonant /θ/ with the closest equivalent sound in their native language, which is /t/, as in "bath" pronounced "bat." Similarly, they may replace the English consonant /ð/ with /d/, resulting in "father" being pronounced as "fader" because the /ð/ sound does not exist in the Indonesian phonetic system (Firdaus et al., 2020).

This finding suggests that when attempting to pronounce English consonants, Indonesian learners rely on familiar sounds from their native language as a reference point. Substitution errors occur as a result of the influence of their first language's phonetic inventory and pronunciation patterns.

These substitution errors must be addressed because they can impair the intelligibility of the learners' English speech. Understanding this specific error pattern assists educators and language learning practitioners in developing targeted instructional strategies to assist Indonesian learners in overcoming these obstacles. Learners can improve their accuracy and intelligibility when producing English speech sounds by providing explicit instruction and practice on the correct pronunciation of English consonants, focusing on the distinctions that differ from their native language.

2. Voicing Errors

The finding suggests that Indonesian English learners may struggle to distinguish between voiced and voiceless consonant sounds in English. Voiced consonants are produced through vocal cord vibration, whereas voiceless consonants are produced without vocal cord vibration. Indonesian students may have difficulty accurately perceiving and producing this distinction, resulting in voicing errors (Laia, 2020).

The voiced English consonants pronounced incorrectly by the students are: /ʒ/, and the voiceless English consonants pronounced incorrectly by the students are: /ʃ/, sounds (Laia, 2020).

The /ʒ/ sound is produced by forcing air through a gap in the mouth, resulting in a friction sound. This is a fricative sound. The majority of students were taught to replace /ʒ/ with /dʒ/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/, and /s/ (Laia, 2020).

/ʃ/ sound, the tip of the tongue must be close to the alveolar ridge, while the front of the tongue is concave to the roof of the mouth. Almost every participant replaced /z/ sounds with sounds (Laia, 2020).

These voicing errors stem from the influence of the phonetic patterns of the Indonesian language, where such voicing distinctions may not be as prevalent. In Indonesian, there is less reliance on voicing distinctions for consonant differentiation, making it challenging for Indonesian learners to perceive and produce these distinctions accurately in English.

Addressing voicing errors is crucial because the distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants contributes to the intelligibility of spoken English. Effective instructional approaches can focus on raising learners' awareness of the voicing contrast through explicit teaching, auditory discrimination exercises, and targeted pronunciation practice. By providing clear models and practice opportunities, Indonesian learners can enhance their ability to differentiate and produce voiced and voiceless consonant sounds accurately in English.

3. Consonant Clusters

The finding suggests that Indonesian learners of English may encounter challenges when confronted with consonant clusters, which are sequences of two or more consonants appearing consecutively within a word. These clusters can prove difficult for

Indonesian learners to pronounce accurately, leading to modification or simplification of the clusters and resulting in incorrect pronunciations (Jamilumulkillah et al., 2023).

For instance, Indonesian learners may face difficulties with consonant clusters such as /sk/, /st/, or /sp/. To simplify these clusters, they might insert an extra vowel sound between the consonants, resulting in pronunciations like "school" as "sekol" or "stop" as "estop." Similarly, they may choose to omit certain consonants within the cluster, leading to pronunciations like "sprint" as "sint" or "play" as "pelai." (Jamilumulkillah et al., 2023).

These modifications or simplifications of consonant clusters by Indonesian learners can be attributed to the influence of their native language, which may have different rules and restrictions concerning consonant clusters. Indonesian has a more syllable-based structure, and consonant clusters are not as prevalent as in English.

Addressing consonant cluster errors is important as they can impact the overall intelligibility of spoken English. By providing explicit instruction and practice on the correct pronunciation of consonant clusters, focusing on the blending and coordination of individual consonant sounds within the cluster, Indonesian learners can develop greater accuracy and fluency when encountering English words with consonant clusters.

4. Fricative Consonants

The finding suggests that Indonesian learners of English may face difficulties when producing fricative consonants, specifically the sounds /θ/ (voiceless "th") and /ð/ (voiced "th"). These sounds do not exist in the phonetic system of Indonesian, making them unfamiliar and challenging for Indonesian learners to pronounce accurately (Putra, 2019).

In response to this challenge, Indonesian learners may resort to substituting these fricative sounds with alternatives that are more familiar to them from their native language. For example, they might substitute /θ/ with /s/ or /t/ or substitute /ð/ with /d/. This could result in pronunciations such as pronouncing "think" as "sink" or "that" as "dat." (Putra, 2019).

Another coping strategy for Indonesian learners is the omission of the fricative consonants altogether. They may simply skip the /θ/ or /ð/ sound when encountering words containing these sounds. For instance, they might pronounce "three" as "tree" or "breathe" as "bree." (Putra, 2019).

These substitution or omission errors occur due to the absence of fricative consonants in Indonesian phonology and the tendency of Indonesian learners to rely on sounds that are more familiar and natural to them.

To address these challenges, instructors can provide explicit instruction and practice opportunities specifically targeting the production of fricative consonants. Techniques such as modeling correct pronunciation, providing auditory discrimination exercises, and engaging in focused drills can help Indonesian learners develop the ability to produce accurate fricative sounds in English. By addressing these challenges, learners can enhance their overall intelligibility and pronunciation skills in English.

5. Stress and Rhythm

The finding suggests that Indonesian learners of English may encounter challenges when it comes to adapting to the stress and rhythm patterns of English consonant production. This is because Indonesian is a syllable-timed language, where each syllable is given equal duration and emphasis, while English is a stress-timed language, where stressed syllables receive more prominence and time than unstressed syllables.

As a result, Indonesian learners may struggle with placing stress on the correct syllables in English words. They might mistakenly stress syllables that are supposed to be unstressed, or they may not differentiate between stressed and unstressed syllables accurately. This can lead to difficulties in conveying the natural rhythm and flow of English speech (Karlina et al., 2020).

The incorrect placement of stress and failure to distinguish between stressed and unstressed syllables can affect the overall intelligibility of Indonesian learners' English speech. English relies on the appropriate use of stress and rhythm to convey meaning, and deviations from these patterns can make it challenging for listeners to understand the intended message (Karlina et al., 2020).

To address these difficulties, it is important for instructors to provide explicit instruction on stress patterns in English, including teaching the concept of stressed and unstressed syllables and their impact on word and sentence rhythm. Engaging in pronunciation exercises, drills, and activities that focus on stress and rhythm can help Indonesian learners develop a more natural and intelligible speech pattern in English. By improving their ability to apply stress correctly and differentiate between stressed and

unstressed syllables, learners can enhance their overall English pronunciation and communication skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from the research highlight several challenges that Indonesian learners of English face in consonant production. These challenges include substitution errors, voicing errors, difficulties with consonant clusters, struggles with fricative consonants, and challenges related to stress and rhythm. These errors and difficulties are influenced by the phonetic patterns and structures of the Indonesian language, which differ from those of English.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the overall intelligibility and pronunciation skills of Indonesian learners. Educators and language learning practitioners can develop targeted instructional strategies to help learners overcome these difficulties. Providing explicit instruction, modeling correct pronunciation, and engaging in focused practice exercises can support Indonesian learners in accurately producing English consonant sounds, differentiating between voiced and voiceless consonants, mastering consonant clusters, and adapting to the stress and rhythm patterns of English.

By understanding these specific error patterns and implementing effective instructional approaches, Indonesian learners can enhance their ability to produce English consonants accurately, resulting in improved communication and intelligibility in spoken English.

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