

THE ACCENTS PROBLEMS IN INDONESIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

There are so many differences between Indonesian and English accent that discuss in this writing. Indonesian speakers get difficulties in speaking English when they imitate the native speaker because the accents in English language and In Bahasa Indonesia are different. The Indonesian language has its own particular sounds and patterns for pronunciation. When an Indonesian speaker learns another language, these speech patterns may act as a barrier to the pronunciation of English. This results in an accented English, such as the “Indonesian accent”. 1. There are several sounds in English that are different to your native language and can be difficult to pronounce. 2. The rate you speak can affect your pronunciation of English. 3. English speakers change the pitch of their voice as they speak. As an Indonesian speaker you may need to work on the tone of your speech. To do this, listen to native English speakers and imitate the way the tone of their speech rises and falls.

Keywords : Indonesian and English accent

ENGLISH ACCENT

Spoken English shows great variation across **regions** where it is the predominant language. This article provides an overview of the numerous identifiable variations in pronunciation; such distinctions usually derive from the phonetic inventory of local dialects, as well as from broader differences in the Standard English of different primary-speaking populations.

Accent is the part of dialect concerning local pronunciation. Vocabulary and grammar are described elsewhere; see List of dialects of the English language.

Secondary English speakers tend to carry over the intonation and phonetics of their mother tongue in English speech. For more details, see Non-native pronunciations of English.

Primary English-speakers show great variability in terms of regional accents. Some, such as Pennsylvania Dutch English, are easily identified by key characteristics; others are more obscure or easily confused. Broad regions can possess sub-forms as identified below; for instance, towns located less than 10 miles (16 km) from the city of Manchester, such as Bolton, Oldham and Salford, each have distinct accents, all of which together comprise the broader accent of Lancashire county; while these sub-dialects are very similar to each other, non-local listeners can identify firm differences.

English accents can differ enough to create room for misunderstandings. For example, the pronunciation of *pearl* in some variants of Scottish English can sound like the entirely unrelated word *petal* to an American ear.

For a summary of the differences between accents, see International Phonetic Alphabet chart for English dialects.

English accents are typically divided into two groups: the English of England (BrEng), and English in North America (AmEng).

| Dialects and open vowels | | | | |
|--------------------------|------|-----|-----|--------------------------|
| Word | RP | GA | Can | sound change |
| THOUGHT | /ɔ/ | /ɔ/ | /ɑ/ | cot– caught merger |
| CLOTH | /ɒ/ | | | |
| LOT | | /ɑ/ | | father– bother merger |
| PALM | | | | |
| PLANT | /ɑː/ | /æ/ | /æ/ | trap–bath split |
| BATH | | | | |
| TRAP | /æ/ | | | |

Dialects differ greatly in their pronunciation of open vowels. In Received Pronunciation, there are four open back vowels, /æ ɑ ɒ ɔ:/, but in General American there are only three, /æ ɑ ɔ/, and in most dialects of Canadian English only two, /æ ɒ/. In addition, which words have which vowel varies between dialects.

Words like *bath* and *cloth* have the vowels /ɑː ɒ/ in Received Pronunciation, but /æ ɔ/ in General American. The table above shows some of these dialectal differences, and gives the names for the mergers and splits that created them.¹

ENGLISH AS A NATIVE SPEAKER ACCENT

English, as a global language, is spoken as a native language in many regions, each with its own accent, its own pattern of pronunciation, showing that "English is not at all uniform in pronunciation" (Ronowicz & Yallop, 1999, p. 26). Concerning the spread of

the English language around the world, Kachru suggests "three concentric circles, representing different ways in which the language has been acquired and is currently used". The three circles are "the inner circle, the outer circle or extending circle and the expanding circle". The inner circle refers to "the traditional bases of English including the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand". The outer circle refers to the earlier phrases of the spread of English in non-native settings where the English language plays an important "second language" role in multilingual settings which includes "Singapore, India, Malawi and over fifty other territories". The expanding circle involves "those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language including China, Japan, Greece, Poland and a steadily increasing number of other states". (Crystal, 2002, pp. 53-54) Considering its role as a foreign language in the society, Indonesia can be considered the expanding circle.

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English is recognized as an international lingua franca. Due to its importance in global communication, English has gained a significant place in education, formally as well as informally. In recent years English has been introduced since the elementary schools. Some preschools or playgroups even include it as the subject matter to be taught to very young learners. There has also been an increase of number of English programs and institutions offering courses to adults as well as young learners. Considering its role as a global language, English learners need to be made aware of the fact that English is not uniform in pronunciation, that there are different accents of English spoken in different regions besides the accent being taught to them, which, in Indonesia, is usually modeled after the two mostly known accents, British or American.

Evaluating English Accents Worldwide is a multinational English accents evaluation

¹ www.englishaccent.com

survey, designed by Bayard and Weatheall, based in University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. It is made up of an international group of researchers interested in analyzing the evaluation of different national and ethnic groups on four of the standard accents of English: Near Received Pronunciation, the educated Southern English English or Near-BBC English, General North American, Australian and New-Zealand. There were twenty researchers in fourteen different countries participating in the project, published in its website, (<http://www.Otago.ac.nz/anthropology/linguistics.html>), retrieved in April, 2004, whereas none was working on the Indonesian subjects. It was also stated that all researchers share access to the data obtained and may use them for any ethical research purpose. This has aroused my interest to take part in the multinational project, focusing on the Indonesian EFL learners' perceptibility in identifying the four different accents of English and their relative ease of comprehending them and the factors that may affect their perceptibility and ease of comprehending the four different accents. ...

INDONESIAN ACCENT

The Indonesian language has its own particular sounds and patterns for pronunciation. When an Indonesian speaker learns another language, these speech patterns may act as a barrier to the pronunciation of English. This results in an accented English, such as the "Indonesian accent".

Indonesian speakers tend to have some common difficulties when producing spoken English and if you come from an Indonesian background, you may find the following tips useful to help you improve your English pronunciation.

1. There are several sounds in English that are different to your native language and can be difficult to pronounce. For

example, the "r" sound is a common problem sound for Indonesian speakers. To make this sound correctly, the tongue must be in the correct position. To make the "r" sound the tip of the tongue is curled upwards and pointed towards the roof of the mouth.

2. The rate you speak can affect your pronunciation of English. You may need to slow down your speech to make it easier for other people to understand you.
3. English speakers change the pitch of their voice as they speak. If you listen you will hear that it is sometimes higher and sometimes lower. As an Indonesian speaker you may need to work on the tone of your speech. To do this, listen to native English speakers and imitate the way the tone of their speech rises and falls.

While these are some of the common difficulties experienced by Indonesian speakers, each individual will have unique areas of difficulty depending on their background and experience.

To receive an accent assessment and get an accent reduction training program for Indonesian speakers, contact Australia English Institute and start reducing your accent now!

English accent training is now available in Indonesia. Please contact Australia English Institute for more information about how you can complete an English accent course for Indonesian speakers.

INDONESIAN TO ENGLISH ACCENT

In general, Indonesians adapt their pronunciation to English very easily. Sometimes when they have studied English poorly this is not the case but after receiving good instruction early on they have very few long standing difficulties, in fact I would be hard pressed to mention any.

An exception perhaps are people with a strong Javanese accent in Bahasa Indonesia, I have found a lot of the time their accents stick thickly when they learn English. This is not to say that some can't master English pronunciation and intonation or that those who can't be understood. Even Javanese English learners find English easier than Japanese, Chinese, Thai or Korean English learners. Mainly because of the similarities between Bahasa Indonesia and English.

Inter-language (mixing the two codes of mother tongue and new language) can be an issue but again with proper instruction this can be easily overcome.

The important stage is Threshold stage, where the learner begins to become independent in their language production. If they have good resources to learn from and a good guide they will do fine, if they have poor resources and a poor guide (maybe the teacher isn't proficient themselves) then this can lead to fossilisation of a poor accent and inter-language.

Indonesians don't talk with nasal accents like Americans do. Indonesians are very vocal and dominated by oral accents. So try to say "My name is Annie" without nasal pressure, it can be sound like "Muy nehm ees an nee" not "My naym eez anne knee"

There is an interesting phenomena here though where students can 'learn' English for 12+ years but still not be able to communicate with it. This is due to a number of reasons such as:

- A one track curriculum, where if you fall behind there are no more entry points. This also leads to multi-level classrooms that are unmanageable for teachers.
- Poor teaching quality (either with pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge or both)

- Too many unrealistic competencies which are the same for city schools and schools on a mountain in the middle of a jungle. That leads to poor teaching.
- Some people feel motivation is also a factor but I feel with realistic expectations and well trained and facilitated teachers motivation will not be a major issue. Sure if students are self-motivated learners they will do well, but they will do well without classes too.

It is a very general question when referring to 'Indonesians' but as a whole those who are given the right environment usually learn English very well, I have seen in general the Indonesian tongue and mind is very well suited for English, usually well trained Indonesians have a lovely accent and if they are the younger generation have good grammar too. The options for Indonesian want to introduce their children to this international language have increased with many more schools using the Cambridge curriculum for their Maths, Science and English subjects including Islamic schools. Previously if the Muslim majority wanted to have their children schooled well and speaking English they had to send their children to Catholic schools, now though many Islamic schools have improved in regards to English, although they still haven't yet got the experience to overtake Catholic schools in general.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDONESIAN AND ENGLISH ACCENT IN TERMS OF PHONEME DISCUSSION

Phoneme / k / in English This phoneme also makes the 20 students of this study have problems when speaking English or reading an English text. They do so because the English / k / is aspirated but the Indonesian / k / is not. The English / k / phoneme emerges in three positions in the word – initial, medial and final, whilst, the Indonesian / k / phoneme just occurs

in syllable – initial position. In other words, the phoneme / k / in Bahasa Indonesia comes out only in initial and medial positions, even though there are some words which end in the letter ‘ k ‘. If final ‘ k ‘ does happens, there are two differences in articulating it. For examples, firstly, some speakers of Bahasa Indonesia pronounce it as a regular / k / without being released as in English, but majority of them replace it with a glottal stop [ʔ]. Consequently, it is difficult for the twenty students of this study to pronounce English words having the English / k / with aspiration especially when it appears in the initial and final positions where they pronounce / k / with the voiceless glottal stop [ʔ]. To recognize the discrepancies, the following are their analyses presented below.

PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘kid’ [kid] ‘kita’ [kita] = we Medial : market’ [ma:kit] ‘bakat’ [bakat] = talent Final : ‘pick’ [pik] ‘botak’ [botak] = bald

PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced - - Velar + + Stop + + Aspirated + - 4.1.6 Phoneme / g / in English The English phoneme / g / also makes the twenty students of this study obtain troubles in pronouncing English words having this phoneme, even though this / g / phoneme is not aspirated, and neither is the Indonesian / g /. The phoneme / g / in English exists in word initial, medial, and final positions, but the phoneme / g / in Bahasa Indonesia appears only in initial and medial positions. The Indonesian language has very few words ending in the letter ‘g’, not including ‘-ng’, and when it really comes out in the final position, it would be pronounced by many Indonesian speakers as [k] or as a glottal stop [ʔ]. As a result, many Indonesian students are unable to pronounce English words properly having the final / g /. The students include it with voiceless velar stop [k], or with a devoiced [g̊]. In line with the findings of students’ pronounces of the phoneme / g / in Bahasa Indonesia and English, the following are their analyses: **PHONEMIC**

OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘gain’ [gein] ‘gatal’ [gatal] = itching International Journal of English Language Education ISSN 2325-0887 2013, Vol. 1, No. 3 110 www.macrothink.org/ijele Medial : ‘eager’ [i:gə] ‘lagi’ [lagi] = again Final : ‘tag’ [tæg] ‘budeg’ [budək] = deaf

PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : + + Velar : + + Stop : + + Aspirated : - - 4.1.7 Phoneme / tʃ / in English, and phoneme / ç / in Bahasa Indonesia The English phoneme / tʃ / also puts the twenty students of this study get problems when they speak English and read an English text. They cannot pronounce English words having this phoneme fluently and perfectly. They do so because of the positions and features of this English phoneme are different from the Indonesian phoneme / ç /. The English / tʃ / emerges in word initial, medial, and final positions, but the Indonesian / ç = tʃ/ occurs only in initial and medial positions. The phoneme / tʃ/ in English is a voiceless palato-alveolar while the phoneme / ç = tʃ/ in Bahasa Indonesia is a voiceless palatal stop. The phoneme / tʃ / in English is pronounced with rounded lips, but the phoneme / ç / in Bahasa Indonesia uttered with the tongue that is usually very far back in the mouth, and is also pronounced with spread lips by Indonesian speakers included the twenty students of this study. As a result, the students have problems to articulate the final sound of / tʃ / phoneme in English because this sound in Bahasa Indonesia does not appear in this position. To know their phonemic oppositions and phonetic features, the following are their analyses. **PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA** Initial : ‘charm’ [ʃa:m] ‘cinta’ [çinta] = love Medial : ‘ trenchant’ [trentʃənt] ‘laci’ [laçi] = drawer Final : ‘teach’ [ti: tʃ] Nothing

PHONETIC FEATURES International Journal of English Language Education ISSN 2325-0887 2013, Vol. 1, No. 3 111 www.macrothink.org/ijele **ENGLISH**

BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : - - Palato-alveolar : + - Affricative : + + Rounded : + -

4.1.8 Phoneme / dʒ / in English = Phoneme / ʃ / in Bahasa Indonesia As stated previously that all English phonemes analyzed before, make the twenty students of this study undergo problems in pronouncing English words. This phoneme / dʒ / in English also puts the students get troubles articulate English words. The phonemic opposition of the English phoneme / dʒ / comes out in three positions in English words. It can be in the word initial, medial, and final positions, but the Indonesian phoneme / ʃ / just appears in word initial and medial positions. The / dʒ / in English is rounded but the / ʃ / in Bahasa Indonesia is not. In English, this phoneme / dʒ / is voiced palate-alveolar, while / ʃ / in Indonesian is voiced palatal stop. This phoneme / dʒ / in English is sometime represented by the letter ‘g’ that appears in the middle of the word, but the phoneme / ʃ / in Bahasa Indonesia is not. These discrepancies cause the twenty students of this study get trouble in pronouncing English words possessing this phoneme. To know the differences, the following are the analyses presented as follows.

PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘jam’ [dʒæm] ‘jalan’ [ʃalan] = street Medial : ‘margarine’ [ma:dʒəri:n] ‘telanjang’ [təlanʃaŋ] = naked Final : ‘marge’ [ma:dʒ] Nothing

PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : + + Palato-alveolar : + - Affricative : + + Rounded : + -

4.1.9 Phoneme / f / in English The phoneme / f / in English and in Bahasa Indonesia appears on three places, initial, medial, International Journal of English Language Education ISSN 2325-0887 2013, Vol. 1, No. 3 112 www.macrothink.org/ijele and final positions. Actually, the Indonesian phoneme / f / is derived from loan words only for instance from foreign languages: Arabic and Western European languages. Several words of Bahasa Indonesia having an ‘ f ‘ can be replaced by ‘p’ letter, but not every ‘p’ may

interchange with ‘f’, for instance: We can say: [sifat] or [sipat] = temper, [syaraf] or [sarap] = nerve, [fakir] or [pakir] = poor, but we cannot say: [fintar] for [pintar] = clever, [fajak] for [pajak] = tax, [faku] for [paku] = nail, [fantas] for [pantas] = appropriate, [fisau] for [pisau] = knife. Frankly speaking, by this phoneme / f /, the Indonesian students in general do not have problems to pronounce the English words having this sort phoneme / f / because most of them are so familiar with it. In essence, this / f / phoneme in Bahasa Indonesia resembles the sound in English. The following are its analyses as follows.

PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘face’ [feis] ‘fitnah’ [fitnah] = slander Medial : ‘define’ [difain] ‘lafal’ [lafal] = pronunciation Final : ‘deaf’ [def] ‘taraf’ [taraf] = standard

PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : - - Labio-dental : + + Affricative : + +

4.1.10 Phoneme / v / in English This phoneme / v / also disturbs the twenty students of this study to pronounce the English words having it. The students do so because this phoneme / v / does not exist in Bahasa Indonesia phonological system. Almost all Indonesian words having this letter ‘v’ are derived from European languages. Consequently, wherever this letter ‘v’ occurs in an Indonesian word, it is generally pronounced as / f / phoneme or / p / phoneme. This phoneme / v / in English occupies three places in words. It can appear in word initial, medial and final positions, but it does not in Bahasa Indonesia. In essence, the twenty students of this study much have difficulty pronouncing English words possessing this sound ‘v’ in all positions since this / v / is not used in the Indonesian phonological system. To know the phonemic oppositions and phonetic features, the following are its analyses.

PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘valid [vælid] ‘validitas’ [faliditas] or [paliditas] = state of being valid Medial : ‘reveal’ [rivi:l] ‘reviu’ [rifiu] or [ripiu] = review Final : ‘solve’ [sɒlv] Nothing

International Journal of English Language Education ISSN 2325-0887 2013, Vol. 1, No. 3 113 www.macrothink.org/ijele PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : + Labio-dental : + Nothing Fricative : + 4.1.11 Phonemes / θ / and / ð / in English These two phonemes / θ / and / ð / absolutely bother the twenty students of this study to speak English and read an English text. They occupy three places in English words, for instance, they can appear in word initial, medial and final positions, but they do not in Bahasa Indonesia because they are not known and exerted in the phonological sound and writing systems of Bahasa Indonesia. As a result, it is very difficult for the twenty students of this study to pronounce English words having either / θ / or / ð /. The students are inclined to pronounce them as / t /, / d / and / s /. Generally acknowledged that wherever Indonesian words in which the letters ‘th’ involved, are loan words from foreign languages. The aforementioned students tend to pronounce the English words: ‘think’ as [tiŋ] for [θiŋk], ‘that’ as [dət] for [ðət], ‘theatre’ as [tiətər] for [θiətə], and ‘throat’ as [trəat] or [srəat] for [θrout]. To recognize the phonemic oppositions and phonetic features of these phonemes / θ / and / ð /, the following are their analyses presented below. PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘third’ [θə:d] Medial : ‘something’ [səmθiŋ] Nothing Final : ‘heath’ [hi:θ] PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : + Dental : + Nothing Fricative : + 4.1.12 Phoneme / s / in English The phoneme / s / in English appears on three places, and so does the phoneme / s / in Bahasa Indonesia, but the Indonesian phoneme / s / is distinct from the English phoneme / s / where the English / s / is sometime articulated as [z] or [s]. Whilst, the Indonesian phoneme / s / is never pronounced [z] wherever it occurs in the word. In English, for instance, the letter ‘s’ is

articulated as [z] when it comes out after ²the letter having the voiced sound, especially in the final position (Gimson, 1980) such as: ‘peas’ [pi:z], ‘knickers’ [nikəz], ‘mews’ [mju:z], ‘news’ [nju:z], ‘nowadays’ [nauədeiz]. In line with the above discrepancies, it can be said that any English words having the phoneme / s / are pronounced as / s / rather than / z / by the twenty students of this study. To International Journal of English Language Education ISSN 2325-0887 2013, Vol. 1, No. 3 114 www.macrothink.org/ijele know its phonemic oppositions and phonetic features, the following are its analyses presented below. PHONEMIC OPPOSITIONS ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Initial : ‘sack’ [sæk] ‘sakit’ [sakit] = sick Medial : ‘positive’ [pəzitiv] ‘kasar’ [kasar] = rude Final : ‘precise’ [prisais] ‘lemas’ [ləmas] = limp PHONETIC FEATURES ENGLISH BAHASA INDONESIA Voiced : - - Alveolar : + + Fricative : + +

From a foreigner’s perspective, English proficiency is quite mixed, even in the capital. That said, I rarely come across a person who has no English language skills at all (in Jakarta at least). As most other people have commented, English is taught in school and many Indonesians I know are self taught.

In terms of fluency, as a general comment, I find that the Indonesians I deal with on a day-to-day basis are perfectly fluent, with the level of fluency you would expect from an (English-speaking) high schools student.

The accent is not harsh, and perhaps one of the easiest to understand in South East Asia, maybe with the exception of Filipinos. I think Hugh Elliott’s comparison to Spanish speakers is spot on. The accent is (generally speaking) not as clipped as Thai or Vietnamese English or Singlesh.

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As you might expect, verbal fluency is generally better than written. English grammar is a nightmare and much, much, much more complex than Indonesian, so no surprises there.

GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE

Indonesian slang language is mostly spoken in urban regions of the Indonesian archipelago. Variations of slang language can be found from city to city, mainly characterised by derivatives of the different local ethnic languages. For example, in Bandung, West Java, the local slang language contains vocabulary from the Sundanese language while the slang found in Jakarta tends to be heavily influenced by English or the old Batavian dialect (i.e. the language of the original inhabitants of Jakarta or *Batavia* as it was known during the Dutch colonial period). For more information relating to the geographics of Indonesian slang and regional influences, please see "Region Specific Slang" below.

In this answer, I will focus on young and well-educated Indonesians who are reasonably fluent in English but don't/haven't achieve(d) a native/near-native fluency. Those people can understand lectures in English and watch English movies without considerable difficulty. However, discussion, conversing in English 24/7, and expressing themselves well in English might be difficult.

VOCABULARY EVOLUTION

Pre-1980s

- *Kumpul kebo* - Lit. means 'water buffalo-style gathering' or 'gather like cattle'. It originated during the Dutch colonial era and was known as *koempoel gebouw*. *Gebouw* refers to a building and thus the phrase means to live together under the same roof (as an unmarried couple). Confusion has caused this term to be linked

with *kerbau* (buffalo). The slang term for *kerbau* is 'kebo'. This term basically means that two people in a relationship are living together without being married, i.e. in a domestic partnership/ de facto relationship. To **Kumpul kebo** in Indonesia is considered immoral and sometimes illicit. For these reasons and also those relating to religion, Asian culture, and general ethics, it is often frowned upon in modern Indonesian society to do such a thing.

1980s

The 1980s was the era of *bahasa prokém*. At this time slang language vocabulary was formed by inserting the infix *-ok-* after the first consonant of a word, and deleting the last syllable, creating a totally new word. "Prokem" itself is a *prokem* word, created by adding *-ok-* to *preman* and removing the *-an*.

For example, the word *Bapak* was broken into *B-ok-apak* and the last *-ak* is deleted, and the resulting word is *Bokap* which, until this day, is used as a slang term for **Father**.

The word *Sekolah* (School) was transformed into *Skokul*, but this word slowly become outdated and by the 1990s the word was no longer used, and changed to *Sekul* or simply *Skul*, reminiscent of the English word "school".

Other notable words such as *mémblé* (ugly, frowning), *kécé*, (beautiful, good looking) from the words "keren cekali" (very cool), the sentence attribute *Nih yé*, and the exclamation *Alamakjan!* all emerged in the same decade.

New Millennium

Much of the slang language created post-2000 originated from the Indonesian LGBT community. The latest method for transforming a word is to take a different word which has a similar sound. For example, the word **mau** (want), is replaced with the word **mawar** originally meaning **rose**.

Despite its creativity and originality, this latest form of Indonesian slang can be quite complicated to understand, even to the native Indonesians themselves. For example: *Akika tinta mawar macarena* originates from the sentence written in proper Indonesian - *Aku tidak mau makan* meaning 'I don't want to eat'.

The abbreviations often used to mask insult, such as *kamseupay* (totally lame) abbreviation of *kampungankan sekali udik payah* (really provincial, rurally lame).

³www.indonesian accent.com

PHONOLOGY, PHONETIC, PHONEMIC, AND PHONOTACTIC

The following are the definitions of phonology, phonetic, phonemic, and phonotactic, presented respectively. The definitions deal with what phonology, phonetic and phoneme are. Phonology is a subfield of linguistics which studies the sound system of a specific language or set of languages. Phonology describes the way sounds function within a given language or across languages, whilst, phonetics is about the physical production and perception of the speech sounds (Roach, 2000). Further, phoneme is the smallest meaningful unit of sound in a language. A meaningful sound is one that will change one word into another word. For example, the words cat and fat are two different words, but there is only one sound that is different between the two words - the first sound. That means that the “k” sound in cat and the ‘f’ sound in fat are two different morphemes (Gimson, 1980). Second definitions refer to what phonemic and phonotactic are. Roach (2000) states that phonemic is the study of the sound system of a given language and the analysis and classification of its phonemes, while phonotactic is the study of the possible sound

arrangements of words of that language. With respect to the above definitions, it can be commented that phonological systems play a major role in learning to read words, sentences or paragraphs in a particular language. They refer to the sound of one’s language in the processing of reading and speaking. Successful acquisition of phonological representations needs accurate perception of phonemic. It is proved empirically that phonological systems help in the development of fine reading and speaking. In addition, teaching English sounds to Indonesian students creates many problems, one of which is the constant interference of the native language systems of the students on that of the target language. Being able to recognize the problems that make Indonesian students fail to communicate fluently, the contrastive analysis can be used to find out the differences and similarities between English and Indonesian phonemes. Goldsmith (1995) ever states that many language teachers still find contrastive analysis (CA) useful, especially in phonology. Transfer is present in phonology more than any other area and it is because of this fact that one can guess the first language of a speaker through his/her accent while speaking or reading a second language. Indonesian scholars of language have tried to compare and contrast various aspects of the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) with those of English. These include brief contrastive analysis (CA) outlines to comprehensive analyses. Dardjowidjojo (1978) tries to explain pronunciation problems of Indonesian students learning English. Since the source of problems lies in the differences between the two languages, exercises based on a careful contrastive analysis are the best for the teaching of pronunciation, and for the findings of the discrepancies and similarities. Furthermore, Brown (2000) claims that the principle barrier to second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system, and that a scientific, structural analysis of the two

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languages in questions would yield a taxonomy of linguistic contrasts between them which in turn would enable the linguist to predict the difficulties a learner would encounter. Whilst, Storkel, (2003) confirms that since the learner tends to transfer the habits of his native language structure to the foreign language, we have here the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the structure of a foreign language. Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn because they will be transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language. Those structures that are different will be difficult because when transferred they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language and will therefore have to be changed. Based on the above quotations, the researcher of this study wishes to find out the major differences between the phonological systems of English and those of Indonesian in the hope that he will be able to solve the handicaps that create troubles or difficulties to the Indonesian students of the English Department.

Pronunciations

- Very rhotic /r/ sound (more rhotic than the American one). To give you an idea, the Indonesian /r/ is similar to the Spanish /r/. A very same trait can also be found in a Filipino accent.
- Indonesians, like many non-native English speakers have difficulty in pronouncing /th/ sound. The infamous example is this social networking application, Path (social network). This application is very popular in Indonesia. However, many Indonesians that I know pronounce "path" as "pet". Simple words like "the", "this", and "that" will sound like "de", "dis", and "dat". Yet, others hypercorrectly sound /th/ in **Th**ailand, **Th**omas (a traditional Catholic name), etc.

- /ch/ and /sh/ sounds are often simplified to /c/ and /s/ sounds.
- A tendency to lengthen short vowel into long vowel. For many Indonesians, "hit" and "heat" are homophones. Another funny example, "she bit me" and "she beat me" sound the same.

Stress

- Bahasa Indonesia is a syllable-timed language. However, English is a stress-timed language. Because of that, Indonesian English sounds syllable-timed rather than stress-timed.
- Incorrect stress patterns in many/certain words. I am not really sure, but Indonesians tend to put the stress on the last syllable.
- Stress is not contrastive. Words are always stressed on the last syllable, regardless of whether they are being used as a verb or a noun, e.g.: record, research, etc.

Miscellaneous

- Indonesians have problem with silent letters. They tend to pronounce all letters. A few examples: **bo**mb, **co**mb, **que**ue, **sa**lmon, **de**bt, **We**dnesday, etc.
- Indonesians generally are not familiar with anomalies in the English language. Some examples come to my mind: purchase = pur+chase; determine = deter+mine; subscribe = subs+cribe; Japanese = Japan+ese; etc.
- Some pronunciation mistakes that I think is uniquely Indonesian, flour = floor; palace = pay-lays, etc.

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