

Contrastive analysis of English and Indonesian vowel phoneme and its lesson plan in language teaching

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Abstract – The study aims to discover the differences between vocal phoneme in English language and vocal phoneme in the Indonesian language. Contrastive analysis is used to differentiate the vocal phoneme found in English language and Indonesian, and it is used to find out the difficulties encounter by Indonesian speakers who study English. This study is a library research study which the data was collected through books, articles, journals, and previous researches related to this study. In addition, a qualitative descriptive method used to set the differences out for the discussion. The result of the study obtained that there are many differences and similarities of vocal phoneme between English and Indonesian. The similarities can assist students to improve their speaking skill in English, while the differences could sometimes lead to difficulties in pronunciation. Besides, there are also some similar vocabularies in English which have one different letter and different meaning, known as ‘minimal pair. Error pronunciation in those words often found in Indonesian speakers who learn English. Therefore, the study then describes the difference pronunciation which has different in meaning so that the error can be decreased. After all discussion, the study puts one lesson plan forward in teaching language especially speaking skill. Its lesson plan is going to apply an audio-lingual technique. In addition to those techniques, drilling is also combined in teaching practice. Beside drilling as a traditional method in language teaching, speaking skill could also be enhanced through repetition and excessive practice.

Keywords: contrastive analysis, differences, similarities, error, pronunciation

1. Introduction

Pronunciation is one of the important basic skills in developing spoken language, listening and speaking. Without good pronunciation, it is impossible for one to speak English well, whereas mistakes in pronunciation sometimes lead to misunderstanding in communication. In order to be understood by the hearer, speakers need to understand English and could express them well. The one important thing in speaking is its good pronunciation to convey the message because understanding is the most crucial for speaker and hearer.

Besides, good pronunciation also drills speakers to understand what he/she hears. Difficulties in pronouncing the words in English caused many Indonesian speakers of English encounter problem, especially in speaking and listening. It happens because many of them are not accustomed to speaking and hearing such words. In addition, there are several phonemes of English in which are not found in Indonesian phoneme. It becomes a major problem that caused English learners could not pronounce English words well. Several phonemes of English which do not exist in the Indonesian language become the most frequent obstacle that Indonesian speaker faced. The common problem faced by the foreign language learners when they pronounce English word was caused by the influence of the students' mother tongue of their first language. The problems appeared when they tried transferring their first language into their target language (English). The other problem is that the students also pronounce the English word as it is written totally in Indonesian. It was influenced by their first pronunciation of the word as it is spelled. Being able to speak English, of course, includes a number of sub-skills, involving vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, etc. But in the process in communication, pronunciation is paramount important in foreign language teaching, since successful communication cannot take place without correct pronunciation. Pronunciation is also the aspect of language that is most difficult to acquire.

Although some people with 'an ear for language' can 'pick up' pronunciation very effectively, for most it requires special training. For Indonesian learners, whose mother tongues is very different from that of English, minimal pairs technique in learning that language, so far, is considered to be a good way of learning English. Teaching pronunciation through minimal pairs is supposed to be able to help learners to establish the habit of thinking in English. To distinguish the English sound that has the similar sound obscurely is by pairing those two words, so it could be easy to recognize whether the sound pronounced contextually or not, because wrong pronunciation could be misunderstanding and obstruct the communication fluency. Kelly assumed, "Teachers can use a minimal pair to good advantage in the classroom as the way of focusing on sounds which have been causing difficulties for students."

In this assumption, a minimal pair drill is considered to help students overcome their difficulties in pronunciation, mainly for English sounds. It uses words that differ by a single sound in the same position, for example, sheep – ship, green – grin. The technique of minimal pair hopefully helps the students to distinguish the similar sounds in English word theoretically and contextually and to practice their fluency and accuracy in oral reading aloud ability.

2. Method

This study applied a qualitative descriptive method. As Ritchie and Lewis, in their book entitled “Qualitative Research Practice, A guide for Students and Researchers” (2003:2) wrote that in the Handbook of Qualitative Research, Denzin and Lincoln offer the definition of qualitative research as “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible.

These practices turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. In this study, the writer applied qualitative descriptive method i.e. describing the result of differences and its analysis, and making an appropriate lesson plan for teaching. In addition, the data of the study was obtained using library research where it is collected through some related books, articles, and journal as well as related previous study. The vowel phoneme of English and Indonesia and English words’ minimal pair found from the previous study. Meanwhile, the erroneous pronunciation of Indonesian speaker of English was observed through experiences found in the classroom.

3. Results and Discussion

There are some differences in vowel phoneme of English and Indonesia. In English phonemes, there are two types of the vowel that usually used, they are “long monophthong phonemes” and “short monophthong phonemes”. While in Indonesia, there are no such long monophthong phonemes. It is the main problem caused English learners to get in trouble to pronouncing several words. Listed below the explanation of a variety of vowel phonemes in both language, English and Indonesia.

Table 1 English and Indonesian Vowel

English Vowel		Indonesian Vowel
/ɪ/	=	/i/
/e/	=	/e/
/ʌ/	=	/ʌ/
/ʊ/	=	/u/
/ə/	=	/ə/
/ɒ/	#	-
/æ/	#	-

/i:/	#	-
/ɜ:/	#	-
/ɑ:/	#	-
/u:/	#	-
/ɔ:/	#	-

From the table above, it can be seen that there are twelve (12) vowel phonemes in English divided into two (2), 5 long monophthong phonemes and 7 short monophthong phonemes.

3.1 Similar Vowel of English and Indonesian Language

According to the Table 2, five (5) vowels in English have the similar pronunciation in the Indonesian language. Those five (5) phonemes are included in short monophthong vowel, in which are pronounced shortly with no gap. It means that all kind of long monophthong vowels is not found in Indonesian phonemes.

Table 2 Similar Pronunciation of English and Indonesian

English Vowel	Indonesian Vowel
/ɪ/	/ɪ/
/e/	/e/
/ʌ/	/ʌ/
/ʊ/	/ʊ/
/ə/	/ə/

This analysis then tells that when Indonesian speakers speak English words with those phonemes, they will find no difficulties in pronouncing them because the phonemes in English are similar to Indonesian phonemes.

3.2 Dissimilar Vowel of English And Indonesian Language

While five (5) vowels in English are similar to Indonesian vowel, there are seven (7) vowels of English which are not found in Indonesian, two (2) short monophthong vowels and five (5) long monophthong vowels.

Table 3 Dissimilarity between English and Indonesian Vowel

English Vowel	Indonesian Vowel
/ɒ/	-
/æ/	-
/i:/	-
/ɜ:/	-
/ɑ:/	-
/u:/	-
/ɔ:/	-
/ə/	-

Therefore, when Indonesian speakers pronounce words that consist of those phonemes, they will encounter the problem and are prone to replace those different phonemes with the phonemes they are accustomed to using in their daily conversation, such as substituting phoneme /ɪ/ for /i:/ or pronouncing /ʌ/ for /æ/. As well as in consonant, some vowel phonemes that found in English will replace the meaning if it is pronounced incorrectly, like in word Beach [bi:tʃ], that sometimes pronounced [bitʃ] (Bitch) by Indonesian speakers who speak English, and in word bat [bæt], which sometimes pronounced but [bʌt], and so on. These instances show that some words in English define different meaning if it is pronounced wrong, some words might have very contrast meaning once it is pronounced incorrectly. The problem occurs for Indonesian speakers do not recognize long monophthong vowel, so that they are not familiar to the sound.

Nevertheless, there are many words in English that do not have different meaning even if its phoneme pronounced differently. However, such thing will lead the hearer or even native speaker to the difficulties of understanding. Listed below some words which have minimal pairs in English vowel and sometimes pronounce incorrectly by Indonesian speaker learning English, they are

Table 4 Minimal Pairs

/i:/	/ɪ/	/ɑ:/	/ʌ/
eat	it	can't	cunt
beach	bitch	golf	gulf
sheep	ship	doll	dull
leave	live	lock	luck
feel	fill	shot	shut
/u:/	/ʊ/	/æ/	/ʌ/
too	to	bat	but
fool	full	hat	hut
pool	pul	lack	luck
food	foot	paddle	puddle
suit	soot	ankle	ankle
/ɜ:/	/ɑ:/	/ɔ:/	/ə/
cur	car	pork	poke
hurt	heart	fork	folk
stir	star	law	loe
first	fast	saw	sue
heard	hard	chalk	choke
/ɑ:/	/ʊ/	/æ/	/e/
not	note	vat	vet
got	goat	bag	beg

cost	coast	dad	dead
sop	soap	latter	letter
smock	smoke	fanatic	phonetic

/ɜ:/	/e/
cur	care
first	fest
bird	bed
park	peck
star	stare

Some of English words with their minimal pairs are written in the table above, the phonemes are /i:/-/ɪ/, /ɑ:/-/ʌ/, /u:/-/ʊ/, /ɜ:/-/ɜ:/, /æ/-/ʌ/, /ɔ:/-/ə/, /ɑ:/-/ʊ/, /æ/-/e/, /ɜ:/-/e/. The reason why all long monophthong vowel and two short monophthong vowels are replaced is that Indonesian speakers do not recognize such phonemes and are not accustomed to pronounce them. There are many other English minimal pairs which are not listed above.

Therefore, after finding and analyzing those words, it can be concluded that the wrong pronunciation of one phoneme in some English words will produce extremely different meaning. Thus, to diminish the erroneous, this study provides one lesson plan in which it is expected to be able to drill and enhance students' pronunciation and reduce their mistakes.

3.3 The Lesson Plan Suggested in Teaching English Pronunciation

Comparing two different languages is inseparable from interference theory combine mother tongue and target language, either in the positive transfer or negative transfer. The positive transfer is the similarity of both mother tongue and target language and it does not become a problem for the learners. It makes the learners are easier in learning that target language. Whereas negative transfers mean the presence of contradiction between mother tongue and target language which makes the learners in pronouncing the words. By knowing the differences between consonant and vowel sounds in English and Indonesian, a new method and even strategy approach to be used in teaching English pronunciation.

The prominent aspect in teaching pronunciation is providing the competent teacher because teacher considers as a major person in success learning process. Then, equipping appropriate facilities in learning. The perfect facility provided by a school cannot assure that students will achieve basic competence because they tend to imitate what their teachers are doing. Therefore, in this context, the teachers play a very important role in creating a proper situation so that the learners can actively improve their pronunciation whether by using student-centered learning or so forth. According to the findings and analyzing above, there is one suggested lesson plan that teacher can use to teach pronunciation. The lesson plan offered utilizes an advanced technology such as a computer, LCD, sound system and so on.

Lesson Plan

Topic: English Pronunciation

Students' number: 20

Class: Semester 2
Time allocation: 120 minutes
Media: The audio of pronouncing vowel sounds

Aims:

1. The college students are able to pronounce vowel sounds in English.
2. The students are able to know and understand the words which contain long monophthong correctly.

Tools:

1. The audio of pronouncing vowel sounds (focusing on vowel sounds which are not found in the Indonesian language).
2. Handout book related to the audios supplied to the students.

Teaching Procedures:

1. First, the students are asked to listen to the audio applied for. Then, the audios are applied twice, in order to make the students be understood the content. The audio is applied word by word. Moreover, the audios contained vowel phonemes (Long monophthong and Short monophthong). It aims to make the students know the difference of both.
2. Second, the students are given the handout which relates to the audio. It aims to make the students understand the written form of the words given. After these two steps done, the students are asked to re-listen to the audio and repeat the pronunciation of each word.

For example:

beach [bi:tʃ] = *pantai*, pronounced [bitʃ] = bitch
can't [kɑ:nt] = not [kʌnt] = cunt
sheep [ʃi:p] = *domba*, pronounced [ʃip] = ship

Therefore, the students are motivated to understand more about the importance of pronouncing the words as they are. Then, the teacher gives an example of minimal pairs and asks the students to search any other words. The students are allowed to deliver the questions if the explanation is unclear yet. In the next exercise, the teacher re-applies the audio. Then, the students are asked to pronounce the words individually. Furthermore, the teacher gives correction to the errors done.

Moreover, the researchers are in process of design an android application base which considers with teaching English pronunciation with the example of minimal pairs, and the evaluation form of English words pronunciation. This application is expected to be able to improve the students' ability in pronouncing the words. The used of this application is up-to-date because the teacher does not need to bring the LCD to the classroom. Then, it can utilize a Smartphone. So, learning pronunciation will be more flexible, more fun and more suitable.

4. Conclusion

The comparison of English and Indonesian language can be known by seeing the similarities and differences between those two languages. English teachers and learners assume that the big problem in mastering that language is in pronouncing the words in the context of consonant phoneme and vowel phoneme.

Based on the research above, the teachers can anticipate and find good method in learning pronunciation, develop the teaching material in the context of phonetic and phonology. Besides that, it can help the learners overcome the pronunciation problem in communication and minimize misinterpretation. So, the major problem in pronouncing the English words is caused by the differences in the sounds system.

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