

ERROR ANALYSIS ON ENGLISH SOUND PRODUCED BY ENGLISH LEARNERS: THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFER

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Abstract

Second language acquisition has become a big issue in recent years and it leads to the study of transfer. As there are many problems faced by the lecturers deal with the students' pronunciation, then this paper is aimed at revealing and describing the errors in pronouncing English sounds made by the English learners because of the negative transfer from their first language (L1). Mix method was used in this study, it began with the qualitative one and then to know the percentage of each data, quantitative one was applied. The data were got from the recording of speaking activities and interview and then it was transcribed into broad transcription. This study does not include the narrow transcription, therefore no suprasegmental features found in this paper. The results of this study revealed that most of the students made some errors in pronouncing English sounds which they cannot find in their first language such as the sound /æ/, /ʌ/, /θ/, /ð/, and /ʒ/. The result is hoped to be able to give some input to the English teacher and lecturer on the common errors made by the students in pronouncing English sounds and lead them to improve their teaching methods in order to help their students in pronouncing new sounds found in the target language.

Keywords: Error, language transfer

Introduction

The term "Second Language Acquisition" which has been started in 1950s from the work called "preventive contrastive analysis" has gained more serious attention from the linguists and some experts from other fields such as psychology. The papers which come into account are the work from Corder in 1967 entitled "The significance of learners' errors" and the work of Selinker in 1972 which entitled "Interlanguage". In line with interlanguage, it has been stated (Odlin, 1989; White, 1989; Gass and Selinker, 1992; Schwartz and Sprouse 1996; Jarvis, 1998 cited in Montrul 2010) that the effects of the native language on the acquisition of a second language in different levels of linguistic analysis (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicon) have been extensively documented in the second language (L2) acquisition literature over the years in both generative and non-generative models.

Some researchers, then, conduct the research on second language acquisition research since the early 1970s within a number of different theoretical frameworks and used some different research methods. One of the articles from Hakuta and Cassino (1977) summarized that there are four main approaches used in conducting second language acquisition research: contrastive analysis, error analysis, performance analysis, and discourse analysis. After those

approaches, there are some other approaches used in conducting research in second language acquisition, however, the new approaches come later do not replace the previous approaches, each one complements the others. For example, a number of recent studies are based on sociolinguistics approach. However, this study used error analysis as there are some considerations taken into account before conducting the research. The problem revealed in this paper are (1) To what extent do the fourth semester students of Muhammadiyah University of Jember make a number of errors in pronouncing the English consonant sounds /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/ (2) To what extent do the fourth semester students of Muhammadiyah University of Jember make a number of errors in pronouncing the English vowel sounds /i:/, /i/, /e/, /ɔ:/, /æ/, /u:/, and /u/? (3) To what extent do the fourth semester students of Muhammadiyah University of Jember make a number of errors in pronouncing the English diphthongs /ei/ and /ou/?

From the research questions above, it is clear that this paper is aimed to give some information for the lecturers and English teachers about the most common errors made by the students while producing English sounds. Therefore, they would be able to improve their students' pronunciation by giving some treatments while teaching English, especially in speaking

class. This consideration is in line with Corder’s seminal article in 1967 cited in Ellis (1996), he notes in that article that errors could be significant in three ways: (1) they provided the teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt, (2) they provided the researcher with evidence of how language was learnt, and (3) they served as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of the target language. Although the first note, “errors provided the teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt” reflect the traditional role of EA, this study remains using this analysis as it would give beneficial information needed by the Speaking lecturer and English teachers.

Language Transfer

The term “transfer” derived from the Latin word “transfere”, means “to carry”, “to bear” or “to print, impress or otherwise copy (as a drawing or engraved design) from one surface to another” (*Webster’s Third New World International Dictionary*, 1986). Besides, Odlin (1989: 27) defines transfer as the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired. From the definitions above, it is clear that “transfer” will have positive as well as negative effect in the process of learning new language. Ellis (1996) distinguish between positive and negative transfer in different terms. He assumes negative transfer as “errors” and positive transfer as “facilitation”.

However, on the other side, Wode (1986) states the different issue on transfer. He says that transfer as a cognitive issue has led some researchers to view it as a process, not the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired as Odlin (1989) says. On this view, transfer is viewed as a process, it is the process in

the learning new language. While the English learners learning English, there would be some interference from their L1/NL, and this interference is therefore become one of the process. For this reason, there is an overlapped definition between transfer and interference.

Basic Concept of Error

Errors are quite often occurring in the process of foreign language learning. When the students learn a foreign language, errors are inevitable thing to do. However, the study of the learners’ errors can be observed as it has been stated by Corder (1974) cited in Ellis (1996). Dealing with the term of errors, there are many definitions from the experts. According to Dulay (1982:139), errors are flawed side of the learners’ speech and writing. These errors are parts of conversation and composition that digress from some selected norms or forms of mature language performance in the process of developing mastery of the target language. In addition, Corder (1974) notes that errors refer to competence errors that are lack of knowledge competence to construct the rule of the language system consistently. Consequently, it can be assumed that errors are the deviation of the correct norm or form of the target language which is made by the second target language learners. These errors occur because of lack of competence in using linguistic systems consistently.

Considering the difference definition between the errors and mistakes, it is necessary to make a clarification in order to avoid the confusion. According to Corder (1974), mistakes are due to memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological condition such as strong emotion. Further, he said that mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning.

In order to have clearer differences between errors and mistakes, the table from Tarigan and Tarigan was included as follows:

The Distinction between Errors and Mistakes

No	Points of View	Errors	Mistakes
1.	Resource	Competence	Performance
2.	Character	Systematic	Non systematic
3.	Duration	Longer	Temporary
4.	Linguistic System	It has not been mastered	It has been mastered
5.	Result	Deviation	Deviation
6.	Improvement	Assisted by a teacher drilling and remedial teaching	Learners’ concentration

The error is somehow related to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CAH) as what Weber-Fox and Neville (1996) state that on one view on late L2 learning describes a critical period for L2 acquisition. According to this hypothesis, the critical period in normal language acquisition depends on diminished brain capacity, which affects the ultimate success of learning an L2. The critical period hypothesis suggests that late learners of an L2 cannot attain native-like proficiency; L2 phonology and syntax are thought to be more vulnerable to age of exposure than vocabulary. On this view, there is an inflection in the relationship between age and acquisition and ultimate attainment.

In line with this, Richards (1971b) cited in Ellis (1996) mentions three different sources or causes of competence errors, they are:

1. Interference errors occur as a result of "the use of elements from one language while speaking another."
2. Interlingual errors "reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply".
3. Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience.

From some theories and point of view above, it can be concluded that errors in language learning is one of the learning result that can be caused by some factors. The result, errors, however, can be identified and then can be minimized by treating the students with some teaching methods.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied in this study (Creswell, 1994; Frankel and Wallen, 1990). It is possible to use both to complement each other, and it means that this study used mix-method. The first step, the data from the recording of the speaking activities in the classroom and interview were transcribed into broad transcription, means that it was not the narrow one, therefore, there were no suprasegmental features discussed in this study such as intonation and stressing in the words they produced. After transcribing, the data were displayed as can be seen in the findings and discussion. The next step was triangulate the data got from the recording with the checklist and from the Speaking IV lecturer's information. Triangulation was used in this study to crosscheck the data to get high validity and reliability. The last step was to count the errors made by the students and made the percentage of each error. It was done to make the result easy to understand by the readers and to know exactly the portion of each error. This is in line with the statement from Miles and Huberman (1994: 41), "During analysis quantitative data can help by showing the generality of specific observations, correcting the "holistic fallacy" (monolithic judgments about a case), and verifying or casting new light on qualitative findings".

Findings and Discussion

After the data transcribed in broad transcription, it was known that there were some errors made by the students while producing English sounds. The detail errors produced by the students can be seen in the table as follows:

English Sounds	Phoneme	Words	Incorrect/Error Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation
C O N S O N A N T	/p/	-	-	-
	/t/	Student	/stʃu:dðn/ or /stʃudðn/	/stu:dðn/ or /studðn/
	/k/	Function	/fʌŋsðn/	/fʌŋkʃn/
		Thank	/ten/	/θæŋk/
		Think	/tiŋ/ or /siŋ/	/θiŋk/
	/f/	Of	/ɔv/	/ɔ:f/
		Wife	/waiv/	/waif/
	/θ/	Death	/det/	/deθ/
		Health	/helt/	/helθ/
		Thank	/ten/	/θæŋk/
		Thing	/tiŋ/ or /siŋ/	/θiŋ/
		Think	/tiŋ/ or /siŋ/	/θiŋk/
		Third	/tθrt/ or /sθt/	/θð:d/

/ð/	Although	/altɔ:/ or /aldou/	/ɔ:lðou/	
	That	/det/	/ðæt/	
	The	/dð/	/ðð/	
	Them	/dðm/	/ððm/	
	There	/der/	/ðeð(r)/ or /ðer/	
	They	/dei/	/ðei/	
	Without	/witɔt/ or /widɔt/	/wiðau:t/	
/ʃ/	Addiction	/edikten/	/ðdikʃn/	
	Attention	/atensðn/	/ðtenʃn/	
	Condition	/kɔndisðn/	/kəndiʃn/	
	Consumption	/kɔnsʌmsðn/	/kɔnsʌmʃn/	
	Dictionary	/diksionðri/	/dikʃnri/	
	Education	/edukesðn/	/edʒukeiʃn/	
	Population	/pɔpulesðn/	/pɔpjuleiʃn/	
	Punishment	/pʌnismðn/	/pʌniʃmðn/	
	/ʒ/	Conclusion	/kəŋklusðn/ or / kɔnklusðn/	/kənklu:ʒn/
		Decision	/dɔsisðn/	/disiʒn/
Pleasure		/plisðr/	/pleʒðr/	
Television		/televisðn/	/teliviʒn/	
Usually		/yusuali/ or /yusuðli/	/ju:ʒðli/	

V O W E L	/i/	Comprehend	/kɒmprəhen/	/kɒmprihend/
		Courage	/koureɪdʒ/	/kʌrɪdʒ/
		Decision	/dɪsɪsɪʃn/	/dɪsɪʒn/
		Delicious	/delɪʃɪʊs/	/dɪlɪʃɪʊs/
		Depression	/dɪpreʃən/	/dɪpreʃn/
		Destroy	/dɪstrɔɪ/	/dɪstrɔɪ/
		Effect	/ɪfek/	/ɪfekt/
		Enjoy	/endʒɔɪ/	/ɪndʒɔɪ/
		Environment	/ɪnvəɪrənmənt/	/ɪnvəɪðrənmənt/
		Manage	/menedʒ/	/mænidʒ/
		Reaction	/riːkʌsən/	/riːækʃn/
		Semester	/sɪməstə(r)/	/sɪməstə(r)/
		Still	/sti:l/	/stil/
		Unemployment	/ʌnɪmˈplɔɪmənt/	/ʌnɪmˈplɔɪmənt/
	/i:/	Diabetes	/daɪəbetɪs/	/daɪəbi:tɪz/
		Disease	/dɪzeɪz/	/dɪzi:z/
		Economic	/ɪkənɒmɪk/	/i:kənɒmɪk/
		Free	/fri/	/fri:/
		Leave	/li:v/	/li:v/
		Magazine	/meɪɡəzɪn/ or / megəzæn/	/mæɡəzi:n/
		Media	/mi:diə/	/mi:diə/
		Present (v)	/preznt/ or /preznt/	/pri:znt/
		Protein	/prəuteɪn/	/prəuti:n/
		Reason	/ri:zən/	/ri:zn/
		Teenager	/ti:neɪdʒə(r)/	/ti:neɪdʒə(r)/
		Three	/tri/ or /sri/ or /θri/	/θri:/
	/e/	Beverage	/beɪvərɪdʒ/	/beɪvərɪdʒ/
		Bless	/blɪs/	/bles/
		Domesticated	/dəmɪstɪkeɪtɪd/	/dəmɪstɪkeɪtɪd/
		Ever	/ɪvə(r)/	/evə(r)/
		Pleasure	/pleɪʒə(r)/	/pleɪʒə(r)/
		Prosperity	/prɒspərɪti/	/prɒspərɪti/
		Quality	/kwɒləti/	/kwɒləti/
		Spread	/sprɪd/	/spred/
	/ɔ:/	Although	/əlˈtəʊ/ or /əldəʊ/	/ɔ:lðəʊ/
		For	/fɔ(r)/	/fɔ:r/
		Moral	/mɔ(r)l/	/mɔ:rəl/
		Phenomenon	/fəˈnɒmənən/	/fəˈnɒ:mɪnən/
		Watch	/wɒt/ or /wɒtʃ/	/wɔ:tʃ/

/æ/	Accident	/eksidənt/	/æksidənt/
	Actually	/ektʃuəli/	/æktʃuli/
	Animal	/eniməl/	/æniml/
	Attract	/etrek/ or /atrak/	/ətrækt/
	Balance	/belens/	/bæləns/
	Cancer	/kənsər/	/kænsər/
	Candy	/kendi/	/kændi/
	Disaster	/disestər/	/dizæstər/
	Factor	/fæktər/	/fæktər/
	Factory	/fektəri/	/fæktəri/
	Family	/femili/	/fæməli/
	Grammatical	/græmætikəl/	/grəmətikl/
	Gratitude	/grætɪtʊt/	/grætɪtʃu:d/
	Hang	/hæŋ/	/hæŋ/
	Happen	/hæpən/	/hæpən/
	Has	/hes/	/hæz/
	Have	/hev/	/hæv/
	Impact	/impæk/	/impæk/
	International	/ɪntəʃneɪʃnəl/	/ɪntənæʃnəl/
	Manage	/menedʒ/	/mænidʒ/
	Marriage	/merɪt/	/mæridʒ/
	Maxim	/meksim/	/mæksim/
	Natural	/nætʃrəl/	/nætʃrəl/
	Reaction	/riækʃən/	/riækʃən/
	Snack	/snek/	/snæk/
	Strategy	/strætədʒi/	/strætədʒi/
	Thank	/tæŋk/	/θæŋk/
	That	/det/ or /ðet/	/ðæt/
	Tobacco	/təbəkəʊ/	/təbəkəʊ/
	Understand	/ʌndə(r)stænd/	/ʌndəstænd/
Value	/vælju/	/vælju:/	
Vocabulary	/vəkəbjʊləri/	/vəkæbjʊləri/	
/u:/	Choose	/tʃu:s/	/tʃu:s/
	Conclusion	/kənkluzən/	/kənkluzən/
	Gratitude	/grætɪtʊt/	/grætɪtʃu:d/
	Group	/gru:p/	/gru:p/
	Human	/hju:mən/	/hju:mən/
	Improve	/ɪmpru:v/	/ɪmpru:v/
	Malnutrition	/mælnutriʃən/	/mælnju:triʃən/
	Music	/musɪk/	/mju:zɪk/
	Solution	/səlu:ʃən/	/səlu:ʃən/
	Suitable	/su:teɪbəl/	/su:teɪbəl/
	Use	/ju:s/	/ju:z/
	You	/ju:/	/ju:/
	Youth	/ju:θ/	/ju:θ/
Value	/vælju/	/vælju:/	
/u/	-	6	-

D I P H T H O N G	/ei/	Afraid	/ðfrait/ or /ðfret/	/ðfreid/
		Break	/brik/	/breik/
		Contain	/konten/	/kðntein/
		Danger	/dendʒðr/	/deindʒð(r)/
		Disable	/disebðl/	/diseibl/
		Education	/edukesðn/	/edʒukeiʃn/
		Explanation	/eksplenesðn/	/eksplðneiʃn/
		Fermentation	/fermentesðn/	/fermenteiʃn/
		Jail	/dʒel/	/dʒeil/
		Lazy	/lezi/	/leizi/
		Maybe	/maibi/ or /mebi/	/meibi/
		Name	/nem/	/neim/
		Observation	/ɔbsðrvesðn/	/ɔbzðveiʃn/
		Paper	/pepðr/	/peipðr/
		Population	/pɔpulesðn/	/pɔpjuleiʃn/
		Rehabilitation	/reihʌbilitesðn/	/ri:ðbilitetiʃn/
		Relation	/relesðn/	/rileiʃn/
		Statement	/stetmðn/	/steitmðn/
		Teenager	/tinedʒðr/	/ti:neidʒðr/
		Violation	/violesðn/	/vaiðleiʃn/
	/ou/	Bone	/bɔn/	/boun/
		Close	/klos/	/klous/
		Go	/go/	/gou/
		No	/no/	/nou/
		Overcome	/ɔvð(r)kʌm/	/ouvðkʌm/
		Poultry	/pɔltri/	/poultri/
		Progress	/prɔgres/	/prougres/
		Protein	/protein/	/prouti:n/
		Role	/rul/	/roul/
So		/so/	/sou/	
Social		/social/	/souʃl/	
Tobacco		/tobako/	/tðbækou/	

From the displayed data above, it can be concluded that the pronunciation errors made by the students are as follows:

lish we have twelve vowels and nine diphthongs. Take /u/ sound as an example. In producing /u/ sound, it will always the same as /u/ in any

English Sounds	Phonemes	Errors	Percentage
Consonant	/p/	-	-
	/t/	/tʃ/	0.6 %
	/k/	Omission of its sound	1.8 %
	/f/	/v/	1.2 %
	/θ/	/t/; /s/	5.3 %
	/ð/	/t/; /d/	4.1 %
	/ʃ/	/s/; /t/	14.8 %
	/ʒ/	/s/	3.0 %
Vowel	/i/	/i:/; /e/; /ə/; /ei/	8.3 %
	/i:/	/i/; /e/; /ei/; /æ/	7.1 %
	/e/	/i/; /ei/; /ə/	4.7 %
	/ɔ:/	/a/; /ɔ/	3.0 %
	/æ/	/e/; /a/; /ʌ/	18.9 %
	/u:/	/u/; /ɔ/; /ui/; /ou/	8.3 %
	/u/	-	-
Diphthong	/ei/	/e/; /ai/; /i/	11.8 %
	/ou/	/o:/; /ɔ/; /u/	7.1 %

In this study, the finding told us that the highest percentage of the incorrect English sound pronounced by the students was /æ/ sound, 18.9 %, followed by /ʃ/ in 14.8 %. In the third place was diphthong /ei/, 11.8 %, followed by /i/ which is 8.3 %. The next ones were /i:/ and /ou/ with the same portion, 7.1% and /θ/ with 5.3%. The others were less than 5%.

The data above told us about how important the understanding of L1 sound production as it will definitely influence the L2 production. The students who mastered bahasa Indonesia, Javanese and Madurese seem to have some difficulties in producing some English sounds they cannot find in their first language. Besides, they also made some errors in some English sounds they can find in their L1. The reason for this is that they have no complete understanding in the variation of English sounds as it would be different from producing their L1 in which the consistency in producing the sounds will always be there. In line with this, Syafei (1988:40) stated that the difficulty of pronunciation might be caused by the fact that in Bahasa Indonesia there are only five vowels and three diphthongs, while in Eng-

words and in any position. In the word "Putih", "Kurus", "Luka", "Usang", "Baru" and "Galau" the sound /u/ will be pronounced exactly the same as /u/. Meanwhile, the English sounds will be varied, for instance, the word "return" will be pronounced as /ritə(r)n/ and "judge" will be pronounced as /dʒʌdʒ/. In these words, the first "u" is pronounced /ə/ and the second one is pronounced as /ʌ/.

In brief, it can be said that the inconsistencies found in producing English sounds were caused by the transfer from the first language to the target language. The way the Indonesian sounds produced was brought by the students in pronouncing English sounds. It can be seen clearly from the errors made by the students in the table above. This is in line with the three sources of errors stated by Richards (1971b) cited in Ellis (1996).

Conclusion

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the students seemed to have problem in language transfer resulting in producing incorrect English sound. The errors made by the students are due to the fact that their L1 influence in their L2. As we can see in the producing of /æ/, /j/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. The first language mastered by the students mostly are Indonesia, Javanese and Madurese, however, the sounds in those three language do not have /æ/, /j/, /θ/ and /ð/ sounds. Therefore, they make some errors in producing those sounds, and some other English sounds. This error will be fossilized for some time, and after it is treated or corrected by the teacher, lecturer or peer, it would be correct. However, the error can occur in the next stage when the students learn some new sounds, yet, still, it can be corrected again. This is in line with the U-shaped learning in which the student come out with the correct one, then incorrect, then correct again (Lightbown, 2011; Jain & Stephen, n.d., Kellerman, 1985a cited in Ellis 1996).

After conducting this study and the errors have been revealed by the analysis, it is hoped that the English teacher/lecturers can give more attention in teaching those English sounds as the learners seem to be influenced lots by their native language. For this reason, the teachers/lecturers can explain to the students about the differences between Indonesian and English sounds in order to be easy for the students to understand how English sounds pronounced. To support this, Cook, 2003, 2005; Kecskés & Papp, 2000 (cited in Horst, White & Bell, 2010) said that considering the difference between English and Indonesian sounds, some scholars state that makes comparisons across languages has the potential to develop learners' metalinguistic awareness in ways that may also benefit knowledge of the L1.

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