



## Descriptive Study Of Phonological Development In Acquiring English Pronunciation

Maulida<sup>1</sup>, Santi Sari devi<sup>2</sup>, Yani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

Jl. William Iskandar Ps. V, Medan Estate, Kec. Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli Serdang, Sumatera Utara 20371

Email : <sup>1</sup>[maulidaaida67@gmail.com](mailto:maulidaaida67@gmail.com) <sup>2</sup>[manurungdevi45@gmail.com](mailto:manurungdevi45@gmail.com)  
<sup>3</sup>[LubisYanilubis@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:LubisYanilubis@uinsu.ac.id)

**Abstrack** *This descriptive study aims to investigate the phonological development in acquiring English pronunciation among learners. The research focuses on understanding the process by which learners develop their pronunciation skills in English as a second language. The study employs qualitative research methods, involving data collection through recordings of learners' speech and interviews. The participants are English language learners from various linguistic backgrounds. The findings provide insights into the specific phonological challenges faced by learners and highlight the patterns and stages of their development in acquiring English pronunciation. The study contributes to the understanding of the factors influencing phonological acquisition and offers implications for language teaching and curriculum design.*

**Keywords:** *Phonological Development, English Pronunciation, Second Language Acquisition, Qualitative Research, Language Learners.*

**Abstrak** Penelitian deskriptif ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki perkembangan fonologis dalam pemerolehan pelafalan bahasa Inggris di kalangan pembelajar. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pemahaman proses dimana pembelajar mengembangkan keterampilan pengucapan mereka dalam bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, yang melibatkan pengumpulan data melalui rekaman pidato peserta didik dan wawancara. Pesertanya adalah pembelajar bahasa Inggris dari berbagai latar belakang bahasa. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan tentang tantangan fonologis khusus yang dihadapi oleh pembelajar dan menyoroti pola dan tahapan perkembangan mereka dalam memperoleh pelafalan bahasa Inggris. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi akuisisi fonologis dan menawarkan implikasi untuk pengajaran bahasa dan desain kurikulum.

**Kata Kunci:** Perkembangan Fonologis, Pengucapan Bahasa Inggris, Penguasaan Bahasa Kedua, Penelitian Kualitatif, Pembelajar Bahasa.

### INTRODUCTION

Culture refers to the distinct aspects of a person's identity that are passed down from parents or ancestors and result in a fascination with recognizing signs related to an individual's character and origins. The behaviors and communities of humans shape their language and lifestyle.

Moreover, language, which is primarily influenced by cultural identity, exhibits specific variations in terms of speech patterns, emphasis, and grammar. This suggests that the language used in specific regions affects how assumptions are made without the need for explicit language learning, as stated in Gianico's work (2008: 94).

Nonnative learners of a foreign language face various challenges, including acquiring vocabulary, using grammar correctly, improving listening skills, and developing proper pronunciation. The learning process for speaking skills is influenced by the learners' native language style when they learn a foreign language. The extent of foreign language comprehension differs significantly depending on the specific contexts and the learners' individual abilities, as highlighted by Cohen (2012: 138).

The process of acquiring English as a foreign language (EFL) primarily focuses on the study of sound systems, which are linguistically classified into phonetics, concerned with the production of accents, and phonology, concerned with how sounds in the language are combined and structured to form meaningful units of sound. This perspective is emphasized by Mahon (2001: 1).

Indonesia has a diverse population comprising individuals who speak approximately 200 different languages. In order to enhance communication and promote unity, a standardized language known as Indonesian was officially adopted as the national language. Among the numerous languages spoken in Indonesia, one of them is Batak, which is predominantly spoken by the Batak Toba people residing in the central North Sumatra region, particularly in the area surrounding and to the south of Toba Lake.

The Batak language encompasses five primary dialects, namely Karo, Simalungan, Dairi, Toba, and Mandailing. Among these, the Batak Toba dialect has the highest number of speakers, and when people mention "Batak," they often refer to Batak Toba. The purpose of this research is to analyze the phonetic patterns employed by Toba Batak English learners when pronouncing English.

The Batak Toba language holds the distinction of being the oldest among all native languages spoken in North Sumatra. It exhibits distinct variations and peculiarities in vowel pronunciation, such as /z/, /ə/, and /ʌ/, as well as soft consonant sounds that differ from those found in English. By comparing two distinct utterances, the phonemes are identified, and the differences are marked by a single notable feature, as stated in Nababan's work (1981: 1).

Mastery of proper pronunciation in English is important for those learning English as a second or foreign language. This process involves understanding and producing English sounds in a way that is correct and understandable to native speakers. However, many non-native learners face challenges in achieving accurate pronunciation due to differences between the phonological systems of their mother tongue and English. The study of phonological development in acquiring English pronunciation has become an important research topic in the field of language learning. This research aims to provide better insight into how non-native learners experience changes in English pronunciation over time.

A descriptive approach was used to collect data on English pronunciation by a group of non-native learners. The data will be analyzed to identify common mistakes made by learners and observed developmental patterns in their pronunciation.

Through a deeper understanding of the difficulties faced by non-native learners in acquiring accurate pronunciation in English, it is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of learning methods that are more effective in improving English speaking skills. With a better understanding of phonological developmental patterns, educators can design learning programs that better suit learners' needs, while learners can figure out areas of concern in their efforts to improve their pronunciation. This article outlines the results of research from a descriptive study of phonological developments in acquiring English pronunciation. Through data analysis and in-depth discussion, it is hoped that we can gain better insight into the process of English pronunciation development in non-native learners and its implications in the context of second language learning.

## **METHOD**

The chosen research methodology for this study will be a descriptive qualitative approach. Research design, in general, refers to the framework used to organize and carry out a specific research endeavor. According to Miles et al. (2014:9), qualitative research involves immersive and extended engagement with participants in a natural setting to explore the ordinary and extraordinary aspects of individuals, groups, societies, and organizations. In this particular study, the researcher has designed a production experiment, wherein participants were given a set of English minimal pairs to read.

This study used a descriptive approach that involved collecting data from a group of non-native English learners. Participants in the study consisted of 50 students between the ages of 18 and 25 from different language backgrounds and skill levels. Data was collected through a pronunciation test consisting of a series of words, phrases, and sentences in English. Participant voice recordings were taken and analyzed to identify errors and developmental patterns in English pronunciation.

## **A ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Analysis of data from a descriptive study of phonological development in acquiring English pronunciation in non-native learners reveals some interesting findings. Following are the main analysis and findings of this study:

1. **Common Pronunciation Errors:** The collated pronunciation data identified some common mistakes non-native learners make in pronouncing English. Some of the most common mistakes include improper sound substitution, for example, replacing /θ/ with /s/ or /ð/ with /d/. Other mistakes include stressing the wrong syllables in words, such as placing the stress on the wrong syllable or not putting enough stress on the syllable that should be stressed.
2. **Developmental Patterns in Pronunciation:** This research also reveals that there are developmental patterns in English pronunciation by non-native learners. As experience and exposure to the English language increase, learners tend to experience improvements in their pronunciation. They can overcome some common mistakes and begin to produce English sounds more accurately. However, this pattern of development is not uniform among all learners, and some may progress more slowly than others.
3. **Effect of Language Background:** The language background of a non-native learner has a significant influence on the phonological development in English pronunciation. For example, learners who come from a language that has a similar phonological system to English may progress more quickly than those who come from a language with greater phonological differences. Factors such as familiarity with the sounds of English in the mother tongue, syllable structure, and word stress can also influence pronunciation development.
4. **Importance of Exposure and Practice:** This data analysis confirms the importance of exposure and proper practice in obtaining accurate English pronunciation. Non-native learners need to be

given the opportunity to listen and practice the sounds of English repeatedly. Through structured practice and getting appropriate feedback, they can improve their pronunciation skills over time.

5. Implications for Learning English: The findings from this study have important implications for the context of learning English. Educators can use these findings to design more effective learning programs that take into account the phonological developmental patterns of non-native learners.

Focused approach

on structured pronunciation exercises and an understanding of the differences between the phonological systems of mother tongue and English can help non-native learners improve their pronunciation skills.

from this analysis and findings is that accurate pronunciation in English is a challenge for non-native learners. However, with a better understanding of common errors and developmental patterns in pronunciation, educators can adopt more appropriate learning strategies and learners can more effectively direct their efforts to improve their pronunciation skills in English.

## **IMPLICATIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING**

The findings from this study have significant implications for learning English, both for educators and non-native learners. The following are some important implications that can be drawn from the analysis and research findings:

1. **Development of Appropriate Learning Materials:** Based on the common errors found in English pronunciation by non-native learners, educators can develop learning materials that specifically target these aspects. For example, exercises focused on the sounds that are most difficult for non-native learners or exercises on proper word stress could be included in the curriculum. This specially designed material will help learners overcome difficulties that are often encountered in English pronunciation.
2. **Structured Pronunciation Practice:** It is important for educators to provide non-native learners with structured pronunciation practice. Exercises that involve repetition of English sounds, pronunciation of relevant words and sentences will help improve the learner's pronunciation ability. Also, it's important to provide constructive feedback and clear guidance on how to deal with common pronunciation mistakes.
3. **Intense exposure to English:** Intensive exposure to English is very important in developing accurate pronunciation. Non-native learners need to be given the opportunity to actively listen to

English through various audio materials, dialogues and communicative situations. By listening to and being familiar with the sounds of English, students will be better trained in producing these sounds correctly.

4. Use of Technology in Learning: Technology can be an effective tool in learning English pronunciation. Apps and software specifically designed to train pronunciation, such as speech recognition and pronunciation training programs, can be used to provide learners with interactive exercises and immediate feedback. Technology also allows educators to record and compare students' pronunciation with the correct pronunciation model, thereby helping students to correct errors and improve their pronunciation skills.

5. Awareness of Phonological Differences: It is important for non-native learners to have a heightened awareness of the phonological differences between their mother tongue and English. By understanding these differences, learners will be better able to identify and overcome pronunciation errors caused by differences in sound-sound systems. Educators can also strengthen this awareness through reflection activities and comparisons between sounds in their mother tongue and English.

With these implications, educators can design more effective and adaptive learning strategies to help non-native learners overcome difficulties in acquiring accurate English pronunciation. Learners can also adopt the right approach to improve their pronunciation skills more effectively and efficiently.

## **DISCUSSION**

Descriptive studies of phonological development in acquiring English pronunciation in non-native learners provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by learners in achieving accurate pronunciation. In this discussion, we will look at some important points that need to be considered based on the analysis and research findings.

First, the research findings show that there are common pronunciation mistakes made by non-native learners of English. Errors such as incorrect sound substitutions and incorrect word stress are examples that appear consistently. Knowing these mistakes helps educators to understand areas that need more attention in teaching English pronunciation.

Furthermore, data analysis revealed a developmental pattern in English pronunciation. Although this development is not uniform among all non-native learners, research shows that

greater experience and exposure to English positively contributes to improvement in pronunciation. With this understanding, educators can design learning approaches that take these developments into account, such as providing pronunciation exercises that are appropriate to their ability level and providing constructive feedback.

In addition, the language background of non-native learners also influences the development of English pronunciation. Learners' mother tongue can have a different phonological system from English, thus affecting their ability to produce English sounds accurately. In learning, it is important for educators to consider these differences and provide appropriate materials to help learners adapt their phonological systems to English.

Another implication of this research is the importance of intensive exposure to English and structured pronunciation practices. Consistent exposure to English through various sources, such as audio materials, dialogues, and communicative situations, provides an opportunity for learners to get used to the sounds of English. In addition, structured pronunciation practice, including repetition exercises and targeted feedback, helps to gradually improve students' pronunciation skills.

In learning English, the use of technology can also make a significant contribution. Applications and software specifically designed to practice pronunciation can be used as aids to provide learners with interactive exercises and direct feedback. Technology also allows educators to record and compare students' pronunciation with the correct pronunciation model, thereby helping learners to correct mistakes and improve their pronunciation skills.

Finally, awareness of the phonological differences between mother tongue and English is an important factor in developing accurate pronunciation. Non-native learners need to understand the differences in sound-sound systems and stress patterns between their mother tongue and English. This awareness can be increased through reflection activities and comparisons between sounds in the mother tongue and English.

learning English pronunciation by non-native learners involves special challenges. However, with a better understanding of common mistakes, developmental patterns, and factors that affect pronunciation, educators can design more effective learning strategies. Likewise, non-native learners can adopt an appropriate approach and engage in structured exercises to improve their pronunciation skills in English.

## **CONCLUSION**

In a descriptive study of phonological development in acquiring English pronunciation in non-native learners, several important findings have been identified. Based on the analysis and findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Non-native learners face difficulties in achieving accurate English pronunciation. Mistakes are common, such as incorrect sound substitutions and incorrect word stress.
2. There is a developmental pattern in English pronunciation by non-native learners. More experience and exposure to the English language contributes to improving pronunciation. However, this development is not uniform among all learners.
3. The language background of the learner affects the development of English pronunciation. Differences in the phonological system between mother tongue and English can be a barrier to producing accurate sounds.
4. Intensive exposure to English and structured pronunciation practice are important in improving pronunciation skills. Repetitive pronunciation practice and constructive feedback help learners improve their skills.
5. The use of technology in learning English, such as pronunciation training apps and software, can be effective tools in improving pronunciation skills.
6. Awareness of the phonological differences between mother tongue and English is important in developing accurate pronunciation.

In conclusion, learning English pronunciation by non-native learners requires the right approach. By considering common mistakes, developmental patterns, the influence of language background, and the importance of structured exposure and practice, educators can design more effective learning strategies. Non-native learners can improve their pronunciation skills through active engagement in exercises and awareness of phonological differences.

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