
EXPLORING THE SELAYARESE LANGUAGE TRANSFER ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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Abstract

Indonesia consists of various tribes and possesses hundreds of distinctive native languages. Therefore, the influence of native language on English pronunciation is seen as an obstacle for Indonesian EFL learners. In Second Language Acquisition (SLA) it is classified as language transfer. Selayarese language as one of the native languages existed in South Sulawesi Province also gave positive and negative transfer towards English pronunciation. It was verified through a qualitative case study employed towards 20 students from XI IPA 5 at SMAN 1 Selayar. Several methods were undergone to obtain the data namely questionnaires and students' recording. The result of the study revealed that Selayarese language gave major negative transfer towards English vowel /æ/ and clusters /b/. Moreover, Selayarese language gave minor negative transfer towards English long vowels /ɑ:/, /i:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/ and vowel /ɒ/, diphthongs /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /eə/, /ɪə/ and /ʊə/, also consonants /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/ and /z/. besides that, Selayarese language also gave minor positive transfer towards; English vowels /ɛ/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɪ/ and /ɔ/, diphthongs /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ and also consonants /b/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /dʒ/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /ŋ/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /w/ and /j/.

Keywords: language transfer, English pronunciation, second language acquisition.

Introduction

English is the language of choice throughout the world today. It has become an international language due to being the language of business, communication, media and entertainment, international relations and education. To speak English properly and fluently like a native English speaker, the EFL learners must possess several skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, pronunciation and so on. According to Fraser (2000), the most crucial skill that the learners must possess is pronunciation as for the speaker with proper pronunciation is understandable, and speaker with improper pronunciation leads to misunderstanding in communication.

However, there are several influencing factors that might become problems for the learners during learning pronunciation. Kenworthy (1987) divided the factors that influence the pronunciation into the age factor, amount of exposure, learners' phonetic ability, attitude and identity, motivation and native language.

The influence of native language on English pronunciation is definitely perceived as difficulty for Indonesian EFL learners as Indonesia consists of various tribes and possesses hundreds of distinctive native languages. Those native languages classified as mother tongue that they use in their daily life from talking to the elderly to chatting with friends at school.

The influence of the prior language in the process of acquiring the second or foreign language is known as language transfer. Similarly, Selinker (1972) argued that language transfer is one the processes involved in Interlanguage development. Language transfer can bring positive transfer when the first language structure shared the same structure or phonological system in the second or foreign language. Meanwhile, it can bring negative transfer when the first language structure or phonological system is unavailable in the second or foreign language.

There are several studies that explored the positive and negative transfer from the first language towards the second or foreign language. For instance, Tawary (2020) found out that Ciaccianese Buton dialect gave negative transfer to the English sound /ɑ:/, /i:/, /u:/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /ʊə/, /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/ and /tʃ/. moreover, Falahuddin (2019) found out that Mid-East Sundanese dialect gave negative transfer to the vowel sound /æ/. The students tended to replace the sound /æ/ with sound /ʌ/ and /ɜ:/. On the contrary, Mulya (2018) found out that Serawai Melayunese dialect gave positive transfer to the English sound /ʊ/, /b/, /ʌ/, /ə/ and /ɛ/ due to the ability of those sounds in Serawai Melayunese dialect.

The realization of language transfer also occurred in one of native language existed in South Sulawesi Province namely Selayarese language. The current study attempts to explore both positive and negative transfer occurred in English segmental features resulting from Selayarese language towards students. The results of the study are expected to be a beneficial input for the students and teachers especially in South Sulawesi Province.

Method

Participants/Subjects/Population and Sample

This is qualitative case study that using field note to obtain the data. The participants of the study were the students of class XI IPA 5 of SMAN 1 Selayar. The total number of the students in the class was 32 that later being limited to 20 as the requirement of the research were the students must born and raised in Selayar Islands Regency and using Selayarese language as their daily language.

Instruments

Several methods are undergone to obtain the data such as questionnaires that employed to obtain the data about students' origin and background, students' recording to obtain the data about their pronunciation. The students required

to read three different English texts that contain the target words in initial, medial and final position of each sound.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data later analyzed according to several stages for instance: (1) designing, (2) selecting, (3) recording, (4) transcribing, (5) categorizing, (6) analyzing and interpreting and (7) presenting.

Findings

The results of the data lead the study to several arguments. It is divided into four parts and explained as follow.

English Vowels Influenced by Selayarese Language

The analysis of the whole English vowel sound leads to three final results. First, Selayarese language gave minor influence towards English vowel /ε/, /Λ/, /ʊ/, /ɪ/ and /ɔ/. These sounds are easy to be pronounced by the students and they did not face any difficulties. The causing factors that bring easiness are the facilitation from Selayare language and also Bahasa Indonesia as those sounds exist in both of the language's phonological system. This kind of situation is called positive transfer.

Second, Selayarese language gave minor negative transfer towards long vowel /ɑ:/, /i:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/ and also vowel /ɒ/. From the finding results, it could be argued that the whole words that represent long vowel were changed into short vowels /Λ/, /ɪ/, /ʊ/, /ε/ and /ɔ/, meanwhile, sound /ɒ/ was tended to be pronounced as /ɔ/. This phenomenon occurred due to the unavailability of both long vowels and sound /ɒ/ in their first language namely Selayarese language. Despite the fact that the unavailability of the sound occurred in Selayarese language, it could not be argued that the first language was the main cause of the negative transfer. Other factors might come from the unavailability of the sound in Bahasa Indonesia and the teachers did not introduce the sound to the students because of lack of time in teaching English.

Last, the major negative transfer from Selayarese language could be seen in vowels /æ/ in word 'and' /ænd/ and 'after' /æftər/ and they tended to replace the current sound with sound /ε/ and /Λ/.

English Diphthongs Influenced by Selayarese Language

The result of the findings related to the English diphthongs led to several conclusions. First, it could be argued that Selayarese language gave minor positive transfer to English diphthongs for instance /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/. From the result, it could be concluded that the students have no problems to pronounce both sounds and the influence of Selayarese language as the first language was one of the factors that facilitated the positive transfer.

Moreover, Selayarese language gave major negative transfer towards the English diphthongs /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /eə/, /ɪə/ and /ʊə/. Based on the result in the findings section, the students were not familiar with those sounds and tended to substitute them into other easiest sound. For instance, /əʊ/ tended to change into /ɔ/ and /ʌ/; /aʊ/ tended to be /ɔ/ and /h/; /eə/ tended to change into /aɪ/ and /ɛ/; /ɪə/ tended to be /ɪ/ and /ɛ/; and the last /ʊə/ tended to become /ɔ/, /ʊ/ and /ʌ/. The main factor caused the errors was the lack of students' knowledge of the target language and gap differences between Selayarese language and English brought them to choose the structure of their first language in pronouncing the sound.

English Consonants Influenced by Selayarese Language

The final result of the participants' recordings brought several arguments that later divided into how Selayarese language influenced the English consonants. First and foremost, Selayarese language gave minor positive transfer towards English consonants as /b/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /dʒ/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /ŋ/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /w/ and /j/. as these sounds are available in the phonological system of Selayarese language, therefore, the students were facilitated and did not have any problems in pronouncing the sounds. They categorized as receiving a minor positive transfer from Selayarese language due to many factors that made the students were easy to pronounce them such as the influence from Bahasa Indonesia that they have learned in school.

Second, Selayarese language gave minor negative transfer to the English consonants /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/ and /z/. the researcher classified that Selayarese language gave only minor negative transfer and not major transfer as there were other factors that influencing the transfer, for instance, Bahasa Indonesia and spelling interference. For instance, the students had difficulties in pronouncing the sound /v/ and tended to change with sound /f/, and sound /ð/

and /ə/ tended to become sound /d/ or /t/, while sound /ʃ/ and /z/ tended to be sound /s/.

English Consonant Clusters Influenced by Selayarese Language

Selayarese language gave major negative transfer towards consonant clusters /bl/. It could be seen from the participants' result that in pronouncing the word 'available' and 'incredible', they tended to add sound /ɛ/ between the clusters in the final position, for instance, 'incredible' becomes /ɪnkɹədɪbəl/ and 'available' becomes /ɛvələɪbəl/.

Discussion

The conclusions of the study bring to several arguments. First, Selayarese language gave minor positive transfer towards sound /ɛ/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɪ/ and /ɔ/ as the sound also available in Bahasa Indonesia and the positive transfer may be influenced by both of them. Furthermore, Selayarese languages gives minor negative transfer towards the long vowels for instance /ɑ:/, /i:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/ and also vowel /b/. The major negative transfer of the language could be seen in vowel sound /æ/.

Moreover, Selayarese language also gave minor positive transfer towards diphthongs /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/. Strong influence of Selayarese language could be seen on diphthongs sounds /əʊ/, /aʊ/, /eə/, /ɪə/ and /ʊə/.

Towards English consonants, sound /b/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /dʒ/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /ŋ/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /w/ and /j/ were sounds that received minor positive transfer from Selayarese language. Consonants that received minor negative transfer from Selayarese language were /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/ and /z/.

Last, from seven consonant clusters that the researcher analyzed, Selayarese language gave major negative transfer towards clusters /bl/. It could be seen from the participants' result that in pronouncing the word 'available' and 'incredible', they tended to add sound /ɛ/ between the clusters in the final position, for instance, 'incredible' becomes /ɪnkɹədɪbəl/ and 'available' becomes /ɛvələɪbəl/.

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