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Phonetic Interference of Sundanese to Pronunciation of German Words

Ikmal Trianto^{1*}

Universiti Putra Malaysia¹

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Abstract

This study is based on the phenomenon of Students who recite a few words in German by equating some elements of pronunciation in Sundanese. This causes results in interference with the pronunciation of German Words. The interference form in this study is the interference in phonetic level. This study aims to describe the following: 1) the mispronunciation of words by students, 2) the mispronunciation caused by the interference of Sundanese, and 3) the form of pronunciation error caused by the interference of Sundanese. This study used descriptive analysis method, and the instrument that used in this study were questionnaire and simple sentences taken from teaching materials Studio d A1, A2, B1 and Aspekte Mittelstufe B1. The data collection technique used in this study consisted of record technique and note. The results showed that students made a mistake in reciting the following phonemes: /f/, /v/, /pf/, /ʃ/, /y/, /œ/, /a/, /'v/, /o:/, /ɐ/ /z/, /y/. Sundanese speakers tend to transfer the Sundanese sound system into German in reciting the phoneme as in the phoneme composed of the following phonemes which are the Sundanese phonemes from other foreign language: /f/, /v/, /ʃ/, and /'v/. Consonant sound changes were found to be more numerous than other forms of interference. From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that many students make mistakes pronunciation of the German language as a form of Sundanese phonetic interference.

Keywords: Interference, Phonetik, Pronunciation of words

*Corresponding author: ikmaltrianto@upm.edu.my

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in human daily life because it is an inseparable aspect of all human activities as social beings. This means that there is no human activity that is not accompanied by the use of language. This is because language is a tool used for communication. Language not only functions as a communication tool but also serves as a medium for taking action and expressing oneself.

The increasing development of globalization requires every individual to interact with others through various skills they possess, one of which is proficiency in a foreign language. The need to use a foreign language is now considered essential and fundamental.

Learning a foreign language is not easy for some people because there are certain aspects in a foreign language that differ from their mother tongue or first language, which they often use. These differences include, for example, the existence of tense forms that align with the context of the sentence and the placement of word stress and sentence intonation. One example of a mother tongue is the Sundanese language. Sundanese is the mother tongue for most Sundanese people in West Java, including the author.

The frequency of using Sundanese in daily life by Sundanese speakers has its own impact on them when communicating in languages other than Sundanese. Consciously or unconsciously, when someone communicates in a second or foreign language, a process called interference occurs. In this process, the speaker equates several aspects of language use in the first language with the second language.

Sound interference in Sundanese is also done by some students of the German Language Education Department at FPBS UPI, many of whom are native Sundanese speakers. This happens because students do not recognize the pronunciation of certain words or due to habits in pronouncing certain consonant sounds. In German, there are several sounds not used in Sundanese, such as the consonant sounds *f*, *q*, *v*, *z*, *ß* (es zet), and the Umlaut vowels (*ä*, *ö*, *ü*). For example, the consonant sound ‘*f*’ in the word *Fabrik* [fa'bri:k] and ‘*v*’ in the word *Vase* [va:zə] are often mispronounced by students. These consonant sounds are always confused with the consonant ‘*p*’ in their pronunciation. Additionally, pronunciation errors occur in words beginning with *pf*- [pf] such as *Pferd* [pfe:ɐt] and *sch*- [ʃ] in the word *Schule* [ˈʃu:lə], where learners often pronounce these differently from the original sounds. A common factor causing these pronunciation differences is the absence of these consonants in Sundanese, making it common for speakers to make errors.

Some Sundanese-speaking students cannot pronounce certain words ending in vowels in German correctly, as seen in the following sentences.

(1) *Ich **habe** ['ha:bə] ein **Auto**. ['aʊto]*

(2) *Das Kaufhaus liegt in der 2. **Etage** [e'ta:ʒə]*

In their pronunciation, the vowel sounds at the end of these words are not pronounced according to their actual vowel sounds. For example, the vowel sound in sentence (1) has an emphasis or stress, as in the words *habe* and *Auto*. In sentence (2), the vowel ‘*e*’ gets sound emphasis from the preceding letter *g*, altering its sound.

In another form, such as the consonant *h* in the word *Lehrer* ['le:rə],

(3) *Mein Lehrer ist sehr nett.*

The consonant *h* in sentence (3), which is in the middle of the word, is not pronounced, but the vowel *e*: before the consonant *h* is read long. However, many learners often clearly pronounce the consonant *h* in that word.

The pronunciation difficulties in certain words, as illustrated above, occur because learners do not recognize the sound pronunciation of certain words in German. In learning sound pronunciation, some learners are influenced by their habits in communicating using Sundanese as their first language (B1), resulting in difficulties in pronouncing words in German (B2).

The objectives of this study include: 1) describing the pronunciation errors made by students, 2) identifying the pronunciation errors caused by Sundanese interference, and 3) identifying the forms of pronunciation errors due to Sundanese interference. This study is expected to provide information to German language learners about the forms of pronunciation errors in German words caused by Sundanese interference. The method used in this study is descriptive analysis

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interference involves the deviation of the norms of one language as in another language, occurring in bilingual conversations as a result of the speaker's connection to more than one language. Interference is a common error in foreign language learning. This occurs because learners do not recognize language acquisition elements, such as phonetic, lexical, or semantic elements.

Mother tongue interference is the primary source of difficulty in second or foreign language learning. Many errors in using another language stem from unbalanced language acquisition. The phenomenon of interference from one language to another is very difficult to avoid because the process of interference is also closely related to the speaker's behavior in the recipient language. Interference affects an individual's pronunciation system, either for certain words or the overall language system.

When pronouncing sounds, learners sometimes struggle to pronounce the language correctly. This occurs due to individual capabilities in language learning. The issue of phonological interference concerns how a speaker can absorb and reproduce the sounds of one language, called the secondary language, based on the patterns of another language, referred to as the primary language. Phonological interference is divided into two types: phonetic and phonemic interference. In phonetic interference, there is a change in the phoneme sound without altering the meaning of the word in the pronounced phoneme itself. For example, the phoneme [f] and [v] in German are sometimes replaced by the phoneme [p] when pronounced by Sundanese speakers. This does not entirely change the meaning, but there is a phoneme shift made by the speaker. Meanwhile, sound errors that can alter the meaning of the word itself are categorized as phonemic interference.

Phonology

Etymologically, phonology comes from the word "phon" meaning sound, and "logos" meaning science. Phonology is the science that studies the sound system of a language, meaning phonology is related to sounds, the sounds produced by human speech organs. Phonology is divided into two fields of study: phonetics and phonemics. Spillman (2000) explains phonetics examines the substance of language sounds, such as their production and reception, while phonemics studies the form, covering the structural function of elements that include linguistic symbols.

Phonetics is divided into three fields:

- a) Articulatory Phonetics: Discusses the physical process of the produced sounds, more precisely, the structure and function of the elements supporting speech.
- b) Acoustic Phonetics: Explains the process of produced sound and its transmission.
- c) Auditory Phonetics (also called perceptive): Discusses the process of receiving sound signals through hearing and its processing.

German Sound System

The phoneme system in German, according to Beat Rues in Fitri and Dwirika (2013), includes:

1. Vowels: [a], [a:], [i:], [ɪ], [ʊ], [u:], [ɛ], [e:], [ə], [ɐ], [ɔ], [o:], [ʏ], [y:], [œ], [ø:].
2. Diphthongs: ai/ay/ei/ey [ai]=[ai̯], au [au]=[au̯], äu/eu [ɔy]=[oi̯].
3. Consonants: [l], [m], [n], [ŋ], [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [f], [v], [s], [z], [ç], [j], [ʃ], [ʒ], [ʃ], [h], [x].
4. Affricates and other consonant combinations: [pf], [ts], [tʃ], [dʒ], [ps], [ky], [kʃ].

In German, there are three types of diphthongs: ai/ay/ei/ey pronounced as [ai̯]=[ai̯], au pronounced as [au̯]=[au̯], and äu/eu pronounced as [ɔy̯]=[oi̯]. In monophthongs, there are Umlaut vowels <ä, ö, and ü>. These three Umlaut letters have pronunciation differences uncommon in the Indonesian alphabet. The letter <ä> is pronounced like <e> as [ɛ], <ö> as [œ], and <ü> as [y:]. These are categorized as vowels because they consist of a single syllable (single vowel).

Practically, monophthongs or single vowels are simply referred to as vowels, while diphthongs are compound vowels. The following is the German vowel sound system. Pronunciation of consonants is influenced by the state of articulation, as explained by Busch & Stenschke (2008), regarding the manner of articulation, which shows how the airflow process is modified with the help of articulatory organs (articulators). In the pronunciation of consonant sounds, there is a point of articulation. The point of articulation is the speech organ that works or moves when producing language sounds.

Sundanese Sound System

Similar to German, Sundanese also has main vowels, namely a, i, u, e, and o. There are also monophthong vowels such as é and diphthong vowels like eu. According to Sudaryat (2008), in the formation of Sundanese vowels, there are aspects that affect the sound or quality, namely lip shape, length, and the high or low position of the tongue.

There are 18 consonants in the Sundanese language, namely /b, c, d, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ny, ng, p, r, s, t, w, y/. The consonants /w/ and /y/ are also called semi-vowels or half-vowels because they often function as glide sounds and appear when two different vowels are adjacent. For example, in the pronunciation of the vowel sequence /i/ and /a/, the semi-vowel /y/ appears, and in the pronunciation of the vowel sequence /u/ and /a/, the semi-vowel /w/ appears. As a result of foreign language influence, the Sundanese language also recognizes the phonemes /f, v, x, q, z/.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research of a descriptive. The participants in this study are Sundanese-speaking students from the German Language Education Department. These students are in the 5th, 7th, and 9th semesters, currently taking or having completed the Sprachfertigkeiten courses, and have passed the ZiDS exam. Additionally, some respondents have lived in Germany. The instrument that used in this study were questionnaire and simple sentences taken from teaching materials Studio d A1, A2, B1 and Aspekte Mittelstufe B1. The data collection technique used in this study consisted of record technique and note.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When comparing the sound system of a language with that of the mother tongue, Lado in Mutiarsih, (2012) examines each phoneme individually, disregarding the general patterns of differences that may already be apparent. The comparison of each phoneme must include three aspects: (1) Does the mother tongue have a phoneme that is phonetically similar; (2) Are the variants of the phonemes in both languages similar; (3) Do the phonemes and their variants have similar distribution.

In the sound system of a foreign language, there are some sounds that are similar to those in the mother tongue and have the same structure and distribution. Lado (in Mutiarsih, 2012, pp. 1-2) explains that the acquisition of such sounds occurs easily through transfer without difficulty. Conversely, Lado also identifies sounds that are not part of the learner's own sound system and have different structures and/or distributions.

Sundanese speakers learning German are likely to transfer their own language sounds into German sounds. Sundanese-speaking learners of German will struggle to pronounce the phonemes [f], [v], [ɣ], possibly replacing them with phonemes closer to their own sound system, such as [ɣ] becoming [u], and [f] and [v] being pronounced as [p]. The pronunciation errors among the respondents are relatively similar. Respondents have the same difficulties pronouncing words containing affricate phonemes and umlaut vowels. Respondents with the experiences living in Germany have fewer pronunciation errors compared to others. Based on the analysis, the phonemes that are frequently mispronounced by Sundanese speakers in the study are /f/, /v/, /pf/, /ʃ/, /ɣ/, /œ/, /a/, /ʷv/, /ø/, /z/, /y/. For certain phonemes, Sundanese speakers tend to transfer the Sundanese sound system into German when pronouncing /f/, /v/, /ʃ/, and /ʷv/. A common mispronunciation occurs with words that have the vowel 'o' in the middle. Respondents tend to pronounce the vowel short, whereas it should be pronounced long [o:].

Another interference phenomenon occurs in the pronunciation of some words ending with 'r', such as immer, wieder, and oder. In German, the consonant 'r' in these words is pronounced softly as [ʀ], but speakers tend to pronounce it clearly as /r/. In Sundanese, the consonant 'r' in words like 'cageur' is pronounced clearly as /r/. This likely causes sound interference in the pronunciation of the consonant 'r' in German. For the consonant 'w' in German, there is a change in sound to [ʋ], but Sundanese speakers pronounce it clearly as /w/, because in Sundanese, this consonant is pronounced /w/ without any sound change.

The sound [y] changes to [i:] in the word /typische/, becoming /tipische/. Besides changing to [i:], the sound [y:] also changes to [u:], as in /Psyche/, pronounced as /Pusche/. In the Sundanese word structure, there are no words with the consonant 'y' followed by another consonant, except for the phoneme /ny/ which is pronounced nasally. For the sounds [k] and [p] at the beginning of a word, there is phoneme omission by the respondents. This change occurs in the word /Knie/, pronounced as /ni:/, and in /Psyche/, pronounced as /syche/. Another form of interference is phoneme integration, as in /klopfendes/, where the sound /pf/ is merged into a single sound /p/.

Sundanese speakers often make mistakes in pronouncing German words. These errors are a common phenomenon because of the Sundanese speaker, as language users, have a set of ingrained rules that determine the structure of what they speak and write (Kridalaksana, 2011). Monique (in Mutiarsih, 2012) mentions that difficulties in learning a foreign language can stem from the use of speech organs due to pronunciation habits, rhythm habits, intonation habits, and language difficulty habits. Therefore, it is not surprising that students still struggle with pronouncing German phonemes, words, and phrases because their mother tongue habits remain dominant in the German language learning environment.

Phonetic interference occurs not only because of familiarity with the Sundanese language but also due to differences in the structure and word forms between Sundanese and German, which cause Sundanese speakers to have difficulty pronouncing German words. This aligns with Siahaan's (2013) view that pronunciation errors can occur due to learners' lack of knowledge about the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) through phonetic symbols or 'phonetic transcription', which serve as guidelines to understand the sound forms of each utterance, thereby improving speaking skills.

On the other hand, Baginda (2013) argues that studying the phonological system of the German language is considered too in-depth for German language learners. However, understanding this sound system will enhance the learners' quality.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion regarding phonetic interference of the Sundanese language on German, several sound interferences were found in the phonemes: /f/, /v/, /pf/, /f/, /y/, /œ/, /a/, /z/, /y/. Additionally, pronunciation errors occur with words that have the vowel 'o' in the middle of a sentence. Interference phenomena also occur in the pronunciation of several words ending with -er [ɐ]. In German, the consonant 'r' in these words is pronounced softly, but speakers tend to pronounce this consonant clearly due to the pronunciation habits in their mother tongue. For the consonant 'w', speakers pronounce this consonant clearly as /w/, whereas it should be pronounced as [ʋ]. However, speakers do not notice the element of sound change.

Other forms of phonetic interference include phoneme integration, such as in the word /klopfendes/, where the affricate sound /pf/ is merged into a single sound /p/, and phoneme omission, such as the consonant 'k' in the word /Knie/, which is not pronounced, as speakers only pronounce /ni:/. In this case, changes in consonant sounds are found more frequently than other forms of interference. Phonetic interference occurs not only due to the habitual use of the Sundanese language but also because of the differences in the structure and word forms between Sundanese and German, causing Sundanese speakers to experience difficulties in pronouncing words in German.

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