

THE EFFECT OF SUPRASEGMENTAL PRONUNCIATION ON SPEAKING SKILLS OF BUGINESE EFL LEARNERS

Mayadah*¹, Muhammad Zuhri DJ², Hasriati Nur³
Department of English Education Program, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone
Correspondent Email*: mayadah0602@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this research was to describe how the effect of Suprasegmental Pronunciation on the Speaking Skills of Buginese EFL Learners. Qualitative method was used in this research with the implementation of descriptive qualitative method. Furthermore, the research instruments were observation and interview to collect data in this research. This research was conducted at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Bone with the implementation done in the classroom for Speaking classes. There were four students as participants in this research who were selected by purposive sampling. Based on the results of the research, it was found that Suprasegmental Pronunciation has positive impacts that show how the Suprasegmental pronunciation affects their speaking skills in a good way such as ease of understanding the meaning of the words, conversation becomes more natural, conveying emotions, and a plus point in terms of communication skills. Moreover, it also found that there are negative effects on Speaking Skills of Buginese EFL learners such as speaking anxiety and local suprasegmental pronunciation is hardly separated.

Keywords: Buginese EFL Learners, Pronunciation Learning, Suprasegmental Pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skill is the capacity for oral communication in a language, including the ability to express thoughts, opinions, and knowledge clearly and fluently. It entails using suitable terminology, grammar, pronunciation, and intonation when speaking in public or having a conversation (Sun in Sun, 2013). This is a crucial language-learning skill because it enables people to connect with others in social and professional situations and to convey their thoughts, opinions, and ideas (Brown, 2007).

The elements of speaking encompass various components that contribute to effective oral communication. Pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency are some of the elements that play a role in language learning and how to communicate effectively (Nurpahmi, 2013).

As a part of speaking elements, pronunciation plays a crucial role in language in term of communication, pronunciation is critical to proper communication because incorrect pronunciation inevitably leads to the recipient misinterpreting the message (Kobilova, 2022). Specifically, this element refer to suprasegmental Pronunciation. Suprasegmental is element that affected the sounds of a language and not the real sounds. Based on that, suprasegmental is also called prosodic (Muslich, 2008).

In this research, the main focus is Buginese EFL learners and their speaking skills. Buginese is based on the people, language, and culture of the Bugis ethnic group who primarily live in the southern part of the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. The Buginese language, also known as Basa Ugi, is a member of the Austronesian language family and is spoken by the Bugis people (Fadhilah et al, 2018). Understanding the specific challenges faced by Buginese EFL learners in mastering suprasegmental features can aid in developing effective pedagogical approaches and materials for enhancing their pronunciation skills. This analysis explores the

linguistic and cultural background of Buginese learners, highlights potential areas of difficulty, and suggests strategies for addressing these challenges.

There are some research that show the effect of speaking elements in speaking skill of non-native speakers. The research with the title Effect of altering three phonetic features on intelligibility of English as a lingua franca: a Malaysian speaker and Swedish listeners by Hyeseung et al. (2018) showed that Swedish listeners did not understand the Malaysian speaker well and the Malaysian speaker was trained to alter her realization of the word stress, consonant clusters and long vowels in a way that previous research has found intelligible for both native and non-native English speaker which related to the phonetic matters. Similar to the research of Perihan and Ozkan (2018) that showed that the pronunciation improvement of students is increasingly high at the suprasegmental level through creative drama. It showed the similar result to Yelena (2012) which explained that the students' language level was increased after learning the functions of intonation which related to their suprasegmentals' skill.

Therefore this research focused on the effect of suprasegmental pronunciation on Buginese EFL learners in Bone which involves examining various aspects related to the influence of suprasegmental features, such as stress, intonation, and rhythm, and accent on learners' overall pronunciation proficiency and communication skills. The objective of this research was to describe how the effect of Suprasegmental Pronunciation affects the Speaking Skills of Buginese EFL Learners. This research is expected to be a motivation for student to learn about the proper English pronunciation. Thus, Buginese EFL learners are expected to understand the importance of suprasegmental pronunciation in speaking as well as information about the effect of suprasegmental pronunciation in communicating.

METHOD

Qualitative approach is applied with a descriptive method through an interview. This research used interview and observation to collect the data because the researcher wanted to find out whether any effect of the suprasegmental pronunciation to the Buginese EFL learners. Qualitative research methods either was employed to collect rich and detailed data about participants' experiences and perceptions.

This research was undertaken in an Islamic Institute in Bone. The researcher used the purposive sampling, which means the type of sample was non-probability or non-random based on certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2018). The participants consisted of two students for each semester and were chosen from the 1st and 2nd year's students who were native speakers of Bugis-Bone and part of the English Education Study Program. The participants were chosen by the researcher among those who had successfully completed the TIME CLASS program, an English-learning course for first- and second-year students.

This research applied research instruments such as interview, observation, and recording to collect the data. The interview was conducted by asking some questions to the participants about the topic of suprasegmental pronunciation and its importance in speaking. The aims of the questions was to find out whether the suprasegmental pronunciation has effect to the Buginese EFL learners pronunciation. The observation either is used in analyzing social interaction between the researcher and participants, with the focused item including behavior and social constructs. Thus, recording is used to collect the data of interview related to suprasegmental pronunciation.

For analyzing the data, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research, it forced the researcher to analyze, arrange and present the obtained data by describing what the researcher discovered. Data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-drawing are the three activity streams that make up analysis in this context (Huberman, 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The effect that the researcher had found after conducting the observation and interview can be divided into two types of effects, namely positive effects and negative effects.

1. *The Positive Effects of Using Suprasegmental on Buginese EFL learners*

The positive effects of using suprasegmental on Buginese EFL learners are as follows:

a. *Ease of understanding the meaning of words*

The first thing that researcher found related of the effect of suprasegmental pronunciation is by using appropriate stress, intonation, and rhythm when speaking, it was easier for the other person to catch the meaning conveyed even though there are some limitations or errors in conveying the message in the language used.

(Extract 1)

Yes, I usually emphasize the words that I want to make sure that people that I talk to know about it.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 2)

Actually related to my hobby I really like to talk to foreigner uh just like OmeTv and we met lot of people and sometime I use uh.. stress, or emphasizing the word to make um... a statement like... dalam keadaan tertentu kayak harus digunakan penekanan dalam beberapa kata yang menurut saya kayak penting for them because if I didn't give a stress for that sentence mereka bakal miscommunication.

(Actually related to my hobby I really like to talk to foreigner uh just like OmeTv and we met lot of people and sometime I use uh.. stress, or emphasizing the word to make um... a statement like... in certain situation for example like i have to use stress in some of the words that I think quite important for them because if I didn't give a stress for that sentence we will have miscommunication)

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

This is also supported by the results of observations in the speaking class, when speaking and students emphasize the words in the sentence spoken, even though they do not listen to or understand the entire sentence, but the listeners in the classroom, other students who are also native Buginese speakers, are able to capture the meaning or essence of the sentence conveyed.

b. *Conversation becomes more natural*

During class observations, the reseracher also found that the use of suprasegmental elements such as stress, intonation, rhythm, and accent can make conversations more natural and focused. This is supported by data from the interview results as follows:

(Extract 3)

Well I always use the same intonation when I speak so I think people will understand pretty well.

(Interview, BA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 4)

Actually uhh... I think my rhythm when I speak is uhh.. fast.. yeah so fast because when I speak slowly I can not uh... elaborate what I wanna say.

(Interview, AL, March 28th 2024)

(Extract 5)

When I speak like so fast like even my friends be like please don't speak too fast what did you say or what did you talking about. And yeah, it absolutely gives contribute to my flow.

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the use of appropriate suprasegmental elements can create continuity between the speaker and the listener. In addition, it can also be understood that different rhythms also often make it difficult for the speaker to describe the message to be conveyed.

c. Emotions conveyed can be clearer or even contradictory.

The researcher also found out that the use of elements such as rhythm and intonation made the emotions conveyed by Buginese EFL learners clearer, such as to express feelings of happiness or sadness. However, it was often the case that students when speaking in a rather loud voice such as when speaking English with local stress had the possibility to be misinterpreted by others with different emotions.

(Extract 6)

Usually when I give someone or teach someone about what I know, ehm... for example when I talk about what I like, I want to make sure that I have that intonation, the correct intonation in the word that I want to tell the other people and also I use some intonation when I try to express my feeling like when I'm really happy or in a badmood.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 7)

yeah um sometimes when I wanna say something and try to make my voice louder and that makes my friends or my audience feel offended because that I am angry and I am not in a good emotion. So I think that's important to control my volume.

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

(Extract 8)

Yeah of course ya, like when I say my voice is raised and loud uh... they mean that I am angry but actually I am not.

(Interview, AL, March 28th 2024)

In the classroom, the researcher also found that with the application of suprasegmental pronunciation, the listeners were easier to capture the emotions that the speaker conveyed. Student used stress on their words to convey emotions when speaking, whether it was positive or different feelings, which was followed by the accent that student used, which was a mixture of American accents and Buginese accents. For example, when a student spoke with an intonation that showed enthusiasm. The listener also seemed to understand and feel enthusiastic about the conversation that took place.

d. A plus point in terms of communication skills

Through the interviews that had been conducted, the interesting thing that researcher also found was that suprasegmental pronunciation had an impact on the communication skills of non-native speakers. The Buginese EFL learners perceived that the use of proper Suprasegmental Pronunciation elements had a good effect on their communication skills. Positive reactions were often received as praise for good speaking skills.

(Extract 9)

Uhh...if there is accent we have I think people perceptions towards us they think that we have a really good English if we really fluence in speaking like using Aussie Accent or sometimes British Accent they think that we are very good in English....

(Interview, BA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 10)

I think accent is really important and I think my accent is quite good for me. And the good thing is, my accent is what other people is, so they easily understand what I said cuz I have Buginese accent and my friend is also a Buginese, right? But if I like, sometimes I talk in American accent they can't catch what I said cuz I think it's something new for them.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 11)

Yeah actually I am talking or speaking using American accent because it is so interesting for me and people amazed by it...

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

Supported during observation, the researcher also found that when the speaker was able to use suprasegmental elements well, the listener gave a positive response in the form of cheers or applause as a sense of admiration for the speaking skill.

2. The Negative Effects of Using Suprasegmental on Buginese EFL learners

The negative effects of using Suprasegmental pronunciation that researcher found are as follows:

a. Suprasegmental pronunciation often followed by speaking anxiety

Despite the many positives for Buginese EFL learners, from the data of the research, researcher found that Suprasegmental Pronunciation also followed by speaking anxiety. These Buginese EFL learners were often worried when they were about to speak related to the correct pronunciation, appropriate stress, and how well their message can be received by the other person. such as the following statements:

(Extract 12)

I had encountered many challenges before like in my interview before this and it's quite challenging because the interview... it's like.... Um.. how to say it... like 'tertekan'... because yeah when I feel up pressure I... sometimes don't remember the word

(Interview, BA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 13)

Basically I'm also a tutor, right? And I teach elementary school and at that time I usually used all that I know, like intonation, dialect, I want to make sure that they get what I said and it is in a right way and not in the wrong way.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 14)

When they try ask me to can you help me to translate this English like, oh my god! I lost the vocabulary and I don't know how to answer the question!

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

This effect was supported by observational data found by researcher that students' speaking, which was influenced by their native language, often causes a shift in meaning.

b. The Suprasegmental Pronunciation that Buginese EFL Learners Have When Speaking English is Hard to be Separated from Their Local Suprasegmental Pronunciation.

Through interviews, the researcher found that the suprasegmental pronunciation of Buginese EFL learners was quite difficult to be separated from the suprasegmental pronunciation of their own local language. This is because the Buginese language elements that they have, have strong elements such as stress and language rhythm which are quite different from English.

(Extract 15)

I think my cultural background affect how I speak and also affect how I interact with other people. That's why I think the cultural is a part of me and it's the identity of my speaking skills.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

(Extract 16)

Actually sometimes kak, kayak kalau misalnya we speak English in outdoor the other hear us speak English, they like judge us like apa sih sok English begitu just use Indonesian, like that.

(Actually sometimes kak, like for example we speak English outside the room, others hear us speaking English, they like to judge us like 'what the hell is English pretentious, just use Indonesian!' so.)

(Interview, AL, March 28th 2024)

(Extract 17)

I think that environmental gives significant umm... changes for our accent because English in not our first language, our mother tongue is Indonesia. So like um... 50 or 60 percents it affects our accent.

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

Through the explanation above, the researcher can state that cultural background, specifically language, greatly affects a learner's speaking skills in another language. In addition, the environment influences a learner's language, especially in terms of accent. Moreover, different language environments are often used to create challenges.

Discussion

Through the data collected from observations and interviews, the researcher also concluded several things related to the effects of suprasegmental pronunciation on speaking skills of Buginese EFL learners. The effects for Buginese EFL learners are divided into two which are positive effects and negative effects.

1. The Positive Effects of Suprasegmental Pronunciation

The positive effects of using suprasegmental pronunciation for Buginese EFL learners are as follows:

a. Ease of understanding the meaning of words

The results show that applying suprasegmental pronunciation, such as stress, can make it easier to understand the meaning of a word. It gives an informative role in sentences where it is able to clarify something both the word and the sentence itself. In terms of stress, Buginese is not much different from English where it also has its own stress. But furthermore, the stress is certainly different in terms of its application. The researcher herself found that from the research that has been done, the effect arising from the use of stress is the ease of understanding the meaning of a word. Apart from that, Katherine's research (2016) stated that The use of stress in speaking is important as it helps convey meaning and emphasis in English.

The results of observations and interviews show that Buginese speakers can more easily understand the meaning of a word by applying stress in the words or sentences they say. This aims to clarify the point of the sentence or message they want to convey. They often stress the pronunciation of certain words with the intention that the listeners understand more easily. Besides that, there is another function of using stress when speaking for Buginese EFL learners in terms of speaking skills, namely to regulate the attention of listeners or interlocutors.

I often give the stress and I try to 'menaikkan' like raise my voice that will take the attentions of the audience.

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

Stress and other elements such as rhythm also contribute to the effect as stated in the following interview statement:

*I really think that the rhythm of my speak really affect the **how** other people understand what I said*

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

b. Conversation becomes more natural

Researcher found that the application of suprasegmental Pronunciation affects the flow of these Buginese EFL learners speaking skills. This means that it has an effect on how sentences are delivered or the flow of conversation takes place. This effect is naturalization. Furthermore, by applying the suprasegmental pronunciation, non-native English speakers are able to speak more naturally and efficiently. The element used is rhythm, and different rhythms certainly affect the way a person speaks, and this is what happened to Buginese EFL learners. They use a rhythm that is comfortable for them, some use a rhythm like that used in English in general, and some use the same rhythm that they use in speaking their native language according to their needs.

Based on Yelena's research (2012) also stated that it also influences the overall intonation form perception and the intelligibility of reading and speaking, and this statement is supported by the following data of interview:

I really think that the rhythm of my speak really affect the how other people understand what I said cuz if I talk to fast they can't get what I said, and if I talk to slow, they got bored and didn't catch what I wanted to say.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

c. Emotions conveyed can be clearer or even contradictory.

Based on the research data above, it shows that the use of suprasegmental pronunciation actually has quite a crucial effect on the speaking abilities of non-native speakers, namely Buginese EFL learners. And in this case, it has the effect of elaborating emotions. These Buginese Speaker learners apply suprasegmental pronunciation when speaking both consciously and unconsciously. Using the suprasegmental pronunciation can help them to show emotions when speaking. In this way, the listener who is not even fluent in English can understand what emotions the speaker is trying to convey.

From the results of the observations, the researcher found that when they spoke English using a cheerful intonation or rhythm, listeners who were not even very fluent seemed cheerful, but on the contrary, when these Buginese learners spoke with a rather firm intonation, the

listeners would appear more serious too. The explanation above then prove that it really has an effect on how the message and emotions expressed are received by the listener.

when I talk about what I like, I want to make sure that I have that intonation, the correct intonation in the word that I want to tell the other people and also, I use some intonation when I try to express my feeling like when I'm really happy or in a bad mood.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

d. *A plus point in terms of communication skills.*

In terms of communication skills, Suprasegmental Pronunciation has a very strong effect. This is because the public's view of people who have good speaking skills is certainly very good. Just like in other parts of Indonesia, in Bugis, someone who has good speaking skills is considered to have good intellectual skills as well.

The Buginese EFL learners admitted that they were often complimented on their English Speaking skills when they were able to speak English with correct suprasegmental pronunciation. Listeners often complimented them by saying that they sounded like native English speakers and that often gave them confidence. And as we know, confidence can encourage someone to continue learning and improving their skills and that is supported by the following statement:

Actually, I have experience when I'm talking with myself like I'm trying to make vlog by myself in front of the camera and there is someone in front of me like Huh are you from Indonesian or not? And yeah... that influences my life like that like their perspective about me.

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

2. *The Negative Effects of Suprasegmental Pronunciation*

Although there are many positive effects, suprasegmental pronunciation also has negative effects for Buginese EFL learners. These effects are as follows:

a. *Suprasegmental pronunciation often followed by speaking anxiety.*

The use of Suprasegmental Pronunciation also has an adverse effect on Buginese EFL learners' speaking skills, this is because Suprasegmental Pronunciation often makes speakers worry about their pronunciation when speaking and this then leads to speaking anxiety. Buginese EFL learners realize that their accent is heavily influenced by the environment, and English has a different pronunciation from their native language. This then makes them often make pronunciation mistakes that shift the meaning of a word from its original meaning. Examples of such mispronunciations are as follows:

When I speak (student mispronounced the word 'speak' to 'speek') like so fast

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

The researcher also noticed during the observation in the speaking class, students when speaking sometimes seemed to repeat the same word to improve their pronunciation and also gave a pause to make sure whether the other person understood the word or the sentence they said. Furthermore, the pronunciation in English is often Homophone, which has a different meaning but the same pronunciation. Sometimes they also pronounce words not according to the original English pronunciation because they are used to pronouncing or reading a word based on its writing so that Buginese EFL learners must try to clarify the emphasis of the word when speaking.

Actually ya, when I uhm towards (student mispronounced 'to words' into 'towards') with the same pronunciation. Actually uh.. I emphasize how to pronunciation a word like tree 'pohon' and three 'tiga'.

(Interview, AL, March 28th 2024)

b. The Suprasegmental Pronunciation that Buginese EFL Learners Have When Speaking English is Hard to be Separated from Their Local Suprasegmental Pronunciation.

As part of individual identity, another thing that the researcher found was the difficulty of separating local accent from Buginese EFL learners' pronunciation. According to Katherine (2016) in her research about phonetic patterns, accents are significant because they can express cultural identity, social position, and geographical connection, which affects how people are perceived and understood in communication.

Although the accent is not an absolute part of the native language, the local accent, which is also part of suprasegmental pronunciation, often becomes an obstacle in communication. This is also related to the previous negative effect where pronunciation can shift the meaning of words. Naturally, this has an impact on the speaking skills of Buginese EFL learners, as their surroundings frequently make it challenging for them to speak English generally with an English accent. This is confirmed by the following statements as well:

I think that environmental gives significant umm... changes for our accent because English in not our first language, our mother tongue is Indonesia. So like um... 50 or 60 percents it affects our accent.

(Interview, SN, March 28th 2024)

But if I like, sometimes I talk in American accent they can't catch what I said cuz I think it's something new for them.

(Interview, IA, March 21th 2024)

Based on the discussions above, the researcher sums up the result of this research that the effect of suprasegmental pronunciation on Buginese EFL learners is divided into two which are positive and negative effects. The positive effect of suprasegmental pronunciation such as ease of understanding the meaning of the words, conversation becomes more natural, emotions conveyed can be clearer or even contradictory, and a plus point in terms of communication. While for negative effect such as suprasegmental pronunciation often followed by speaking anxiety, the suprasegmental pronunciation that Buginese EFL learners have when speaking English is hard to be separated from their local suprasegmental pronunciation.

Comparing to the quantitative research of Hyeseung (2018) with the title Effect of altering three phonetic features on intelligibility of English as a lingua franca: a Malaysian speaker and Swedish listeners. It showed that there was a different result of this research and Hyeseung's research. This research proved that suprasegmental pronunciation was also created some negative impact in students' speaking skills and not only creating positive impact such as the increasement in understanding.

CONCLUSION

From the results of research and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn that the effect of suprasegmental pronunciation on Buginese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking ability yields both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, the application of suprasegmental features enhances comprehension of words and sentences, fosters natural communication, enriches overall communication skills, and

facilitates more efficient conveyance of emotions or contradictions. However, alongside these benefits, there are notable challenges.

Buginese EFL learners may experience increased speaking anxiety when focusing on mastering suprasegmental pronunciation, potentially hindering their fluency and confidence. Moreover, the inherent difficulty in separating their local suprasegmental pronunciation from English suprasegmentals poses a significant obstacle. These negative effects underscore the need for nuanced approaches in English language instruction, balancing the benefits of suprasegmental pronunciation with strategies to address associated challenges effectively. Such approaches can help optimize Buginese EFL learners' English speaking proficiency while mitigating potential barriers posed by suprasegmental features.

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