

INVESTIGATING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES AMONG THE DAYAK KANAYANT EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Veggi Rische, Kunto Nurcahyoko, Efrika Siboro
Universitas Katolik Santo Agustinus Hippo

veggirische748@gmail.com, k.nurcahyoko@sanagustin.ac.id, efrikasiboro6@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study investigates the pronunciation challenges of Dayak Kanayant EFL pre-service teachers and strategies to mitigate such challenges. The present study employed a mixed methods approach. There were 10 pre-service teachers who participated in the study. For the quantitative data, the participants were asked to do voice recordings of 30 English words to identify patterns of pronunciation errors. To generate the qualitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with participants to explore the strategies they used to overcome pronunciation challenges. Three primary categories of pronunciation problems were identified: complicated errors (6.7%), vowel errors (41%), and consonant faults (52.3%). Vowel errors frequently entailed replacing English vowels with Dayak Kanayant phonetic system-related sounds, while consonant errors included replacing /f/ and /v/ with /p/ and /b/ since these sounds are not present in their mother tongue. Consonant clusters and silent letters were among the complex errors. Participants used a variety of strategies to overcome these obstacles, such as technology-based resources (including YouTube and Google Translate), peer feedback, mimicking and repeating native speakers, and heightened awareness of how their original accent affects how they pronounce English. The study emphasizes the significance of comprehending the phonetic distinctions between the Dayak Kanayant language and English, and it recommends that pre-service teachers employ focused techniques to enhance their pronunciation.

Keywords: Pronunciation; Pre-Service Teachers; Dayak Kanayant

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of spoken communication in English. Pronunciation itself is the way a word is articulated, encompassing the production of sounds, the stress placed on certain syllables, and the rhythm of speech (Begum & Hoque, 2016). Correct pronunciation facilitates better comprehension and allows learners to convey their intended meanings more effectively in various interactive environments (Kosasih, 2021).

However, many EFL learners in Indonesia struggle with word stress and pronunciation, which can affect the communicative competence (Tambunsaribu & Simatupang 2021). As Indonesia has over 700 local languages which are spoken throughout its vast archipelago, the local languages serve as crucial markers of ethnic and tribal identity. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of these languages function as mother tongues or first languages for many communities and impact their accents or pronunciation since childhood (Aji et al., 2022).

One of few examples of the diversity of local language accents in Indonesia can be found in the Dayak Kanayant community in West Kalimantan, which is a Dayak sub-tribe in Kalimantan. According to Yudianto et al., (2023), the number of Dayak Kanayant language speakers is around

321,000 people. They further mention that the speakers of the Dayak Kanayatn language can be found in several areas such as Bengkayang, Singkawang, Mempawah, Kubu Raya and Landak (Yudianto et al., 2023). Language among the Dayak Kanayatn community is not only a means of communication, but also as an oral cultural heritage that contains local wisdom values. Through this language, the characteristics of the community and its use in everyday life are illustrated (Melati & Rahardi, 2022).

Local language accents are one of the acoustic-phonetic variations that have a significant influence in formal learning, which, although accents can slow down the beginning, in the long run, exposure to accent diversity can help students understand broader language patterns and improve their abilities (Quam & Creel, 2021). However, a different view is also presented by Bent et al., (2021), who examined the effect of "Pronunciation Distance" on the human ability to recognize words in children and adults. At higher levels of education, there are more complex learning materials, such as English. Indonesia, which is not a native English-speaking country, faces several challenges in its learning efforts.

There are several types of accent errors which are commonly encountered by learners include vowel errors, consonant errors, and complex errors (Ikhwanur et al., 2022). Vowel errors typically occur when learners substitute or mispronounce vowel sounds, which can lead to misunderstandings (Saud Alharbi et al., 2023). Consonant errors may involve omitting or altering consonants, affecting overall clarity (Aryanika, 2025). Complex errors encompass a combination of both vowel and consonant errors, often reflecting deeper phonetic challenges related to the influence of the learners' native language (Wiranda et al., 2023). To address these accent-related challenges, there are some strategies that Pre-service teachers usually employ. Technology-based educational resources enhance pronunciation practice through interactive applications, platforms that provide instant feedback (Bent & Holt, 2018). Besides, imitation and repetition are also usually employed by English learners (Mardiyah & Santika, 2023).

Currently, the rise of English as a global lingua franca has shifted its ownership across different cultural contexts and presents both challenges and opportunities in English language teaching (Crystal, 2003). Pre-service teachers, particularly in regions with strong local dialects or languages such as in the Dayak Kanayatn community, need to strike a balance between fostering an appreciation for World Englishes and mastering standardized English (Seidlhofer, 2005). Recognizing the significance of World Englishes is essential in today's global context; however, it is equally important for pre-service teachers to learn standardized English accents. Proficiency in standardized English is critical not only to enhance their own language skills but also to effectively teach English to future students (McKay, 2012). As future educators, these individuals

must be equipped with the necessary tools to acquire various accents and dialects to ensure clear communication and comprehension among diverse learners (Jenkins, 2006).

EFL Pre-service teachers of Dayak Kanayant ethnic background, have some innate common accents. There is similar study which shows that the Dayak Ribun language has the characteristics of vowel phonemes which are generally in order more frequently used are /i/, /u/, /e/, /o/, and /a/, as well as the tendency to use the consonant /p/ in place of the consonants /f/ or /v/ which are not found in the phonological system of their language (Simanjuntak & Bunau, 2023). This phenomenon illustrates that each local language or mother tongue has a unique phonetic pattern which sometime can interfere with the development of a more native-like accent (Almusharraf, 2022).

Currently, there is a noticeable gap in the research regarding the influence of Dayak Kanayatn language accents on English language learning. This area remains underexplored because previous studies typically focus on major tribes with students rather than pre-service teachers (Boemiya et al., 2023; Saddhono & Rohmadi, 2014; Setyaningsih et al., 2019). Such a limited perspective fails to account for the unique linguistic challenges faced by pre-service teachers who are transitioning from their native languages to English especially in the Dayak Kanayant community. Understanding these influences is crucial, as preservice teachers play a vital role in shaping future generations of English Pre-service teachers and must be equipped to address the inherent linguistic challenges that arise from their backgrounds.

Therefore, this study specifically investigates the pronunciation challenges of Dayak Kanayant EFL pre-service teachers and strategies to mitigate such challenges. The following research questions support this study: 1) What are the most common pronunciation errors done by Dayak Kanayant pre-service teachers in speaking English? And 2) How do Dayak Kanayant pre-service teachers (EFL) employ strategies to mitigate the accent error?

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches which allows for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Consistent with this framework, the current research combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Initially, quantitative data was collected through voice recordings to analyze the participants' pronunciation error patterns (Hardiansyah et al., 2024). This phase also involved identifying the frequency and types of pronunciation errors. Following this, qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews to gain insights into the participants' strategies for addressing challenges based on the observed pronunciation errors.

The participants in this study consisted of 10 Dayak Kanayant pre-service teachers enrolled in an English education program at a university in West Kalimantan Province. The selection of participants was based on their mother tongue, the Dayak Kanayant local language, as well as their semester level. Utilizing a purposive sampling technique, the sample included 2 students from the third semester, 3 students from the fifth semester, and 5 students from the seventh semester. The group was evenly divided by gender, comprising 5 male and 5 female participants. Notably, 5 early-semester students have completed a foundational course in pronunciation, specifically Phonetics and Phonology, which is a required module for first-semester students in the English Department designed for those without prior exposure to Linguistics courses. Additionally, the 5 seventh-semester students are currently engaged in teaching practice at local schools.

The researchers utilized voice recordings to collect participants' pronunciation data. Participants were asked to pronounce 30 simple English vocabulary words selected from the work of Elmahdi & Hezam, (2020), focusing on basic English terms commonly used in classrooms and communities. These recordings were used to identify pronunciation errors that may be influenced by the typical Dayak Kanayant accent. The next instrument utilized in this study is open-ended interviews. These interviews were conducted in a focused and direct manner to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind the participants' pronunciation errors. Each interview consisted of six questions designed to explore the strategies participants employed and the methods they used to mitigate the impact of their accents on learning English.

For data analysis, the recorded voices were transcribed by the researchers and the pronunciation errors were examined according to English pronunciation standards as outlined in the Oxford Dictionary and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The errors were counted to identify consistent error patterns among the participants, thereby incorporating a quantitative approach into the analysis. Subsequently, the results of in-person interviews were also analyzed qualitatively to understand the factors that cause pronunciation errors as well as the approaches taken by the participants in overcoming the accent errors. As for the validity in this study, researchers used content validity to ensure that the research instrument can measure what it wants to measure. The present study involved two experts on English language teaching and Dayak Kanayant accent to validate the instruments.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The findings of this study are divided into two main sections to address the research questions: (1) the most common pronunciation errors made by Dayak Kanayant EFL pre-service teachers,

and (2) the strategies they employ to mitigate these errors. The results are based on data collected from audio recordings of participants reading 30 English words and follow-up interviews.

Most Common Accent Errors Among Dayak Kanayant EFL Pre-service teachers

Analysis of the audio recordings reveal the most frequent patterns of pronunciation errors of the 10 participants. These errors are categorized into three types: vowel errors (Error 1), consonant errors (F/V substitution, Error 2), and complex combinations (Error 3).

Table 1. Frequency of Pronunciation Errors

Error Type	Number of Errors	Percentage	Examples of Errors
Vowel Errors (E1)	43	41%	"eleven" (/ɪ'levən/ → /e'levən/), "effect" (/ɪ'fɛkt/ → /e'fekt/)
Consonant Errors (E2)	55	52.3%	"five" (/faɪv/ → /paɪb/), "village" (/'vɪlɪdʒ/ → /'bɪlɪdʒ/)
Complex Errors (E3)	7	6.7%	"achieve" (/ə'tʃi:v/ → /a'tʃivə/), "receive" (/rɪ'si:v/ → /re'siv/)

Vowel Errors:

Participants frequently mispronounced short vowels, replacing them with elongated or diphthongized sounds. For example, the word "eleven" (/ɪ'levən/) was often pronounced as /e'levən/, and "effect" (/ɪ'fɛkt/) as /e'fekt/. This pattern suggests that the Dayak Kanayant phonetic system, which lacks certain English vowel sounds, influences participants to substitute them with more familiar sounds.

Consonant Errors:

The substitution of /f/ and /v/ with /p/ and /b/ was a common issue. For instance, "five" (/faɪv/) was pronounced as /paɪb/, and "village" (/'vɪlɪdʒ/) as /'bɪlɪdʒ/. These errors occur because the Dayak Kanayant's language does not include the /f/ and /v/ sounds, leading participants to replace them with the closest available consonants (/p/ and /b/).

Complex Errors:

Errors in consonant clusters and silent letters are less frequent but still notable. For example, "achieve" (/ə'tʃi:v/) was pronounced as /a'tʃivə/, and "receive" (/rɪ'si:v/) as /re'siv/. These errors highlight the difficulty participants face with English phonetic rules, such as silent letters and complex syllable structures.

Strategies Employed by Dayak Kanayant Pre- Services Teachers to Mitigate Accent Errors

The follow-up interviews provided insights into the strategies participants use to address their pronunciation challenges.

Table 2. Strategies mitigate the pronunciation challenges

Strategies	Explanation	Example
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Technology-Based Learning Tools	Many participants relied on digital tools such as Google Translate, Cambridge Dictionary, and YouTube to access accurate pronunciation models.	(P4) "I use Google Translate to check how words are pronounced. It helps me correct my mistakes."
Repetition and Imitation	Participants frequently practiced pronunciation by mimicking native speakers.	(P6) "I mimic native speakers' lip movements from videos and practice in front of the mirror."
Peer Interaction and Feedback	Participants collaborated with their peers to create a better learning environment. The language exchange with peers or tutors was effective for receiving corrective feedback.	(P3) "The method that can help me to practice English in my daily life is from friends who can be from my college friends or my kos friends and ask them for the feedback from friends."
Knowledge of the Impact of Local Accents	Participants made an attempt to distinguish sounds because they were aware of how their Dayak Kanayant accent affected how they pronounced words in English.	(P7) "We don't have /f/ or /v/ in my language. Every day, I make myself rehearse these noises. "

Discussion

This study investigated how the Dayak Kanayant accent affects pre-service teachers' pronunciation of English and the methods they use to overcome these accent-related difficulties. The results offer insightful information on the most frequent pronunciation mistakes and strategies used by students to correct them. The results are explained in full below.

The Most Frequently Made Pronunciation Errors by Dayak Kanayant Pre-Service Teachers

Based on the study, Dayak Kanayant pre-service teachers commonly make pronunciation mistakes affected by their native phonetic system, according to the study of audio recordings. The first error deals with vowel error. 41% of all errors were vowel errors, making them the second most frequent. Short vowels were frequently mispronounced by participants, who substituted longer or diphthongized sounds. For instance: "eleven" (/ɪ'levən/) was pronounced as /e'levən/ and "effect" (/ɪ'fekt/) was pronounced as /e'fekt/.

This pattern is consistent with earlier studies on how native language phonology affects the acquisition of second languages (L2). Due to the absence of some English vowel sounds in the Dayak Kanayant language, participants tend to replace them with more recognizable sounds from their mother tongue. Participants whose native languages have simpler vowel systems than English frequently experience this phenomenon, which is called phonological transfer, (Saud Alharbi et al., 2023).

The next error is consonant error. The error is particularly noticeable in the substitution of /f/ and /v/ with /p/ and /b/. The error is the first most frequent, contributing 52.3% of errors. Examples include "five" (/faɪv/) pronounced as /paɪb/ and "village" (/ˈvɪlɪdʒ/) pronounced as /ˈbɪlɪdʒ/. The /f/ and /v/ sounds are absent from the Dayak Kanayant language, which leads to these mistakes.

Consequently, participants substitute the nearest consonants (/p/ and /b/) for them. This conclusion is congruent with studies on other languages that lack some English consonants, such as Arabic and Japanese, where participants often substitute unfamiliar sounds with those found in their native languages (Aryanika, 2025; Simanjuntak & Bunau, 2023).

The last error is complex errors such as mispronouncing consonant clusters or silent letters. In the study, this type of error is less frequent but still notable, accounting for 6.7% of errors. Examples include "achieve" (/ə'tʃi:v/) pronounced as /a'tʃivə/ and "receive" (/ri'si:v/) pronounced as /re'siv/. This error highlights the difficulty participants face with English phonetic rules, such as silent letters and complex syllable structures. This aligns with research showing that participants from languages with simpler syllable structures often struggle with English consonant clusters (Wiranda et al., 2023).

Strategies Employed by Dayak Kanayant EFL Pre-Service Teachers to Reduce Accent Errors

The results of the follow-up interviews showed that participants use a range of techniques to deal with their pronunciation issues. Technology-based learning resources, imitation and repetition, peer interaction and feedback, and awareness of the influence of regional accents are the four primary categories into which these tactics can be divided.

The first strategy is to utilize technology-based educational resources. To obtain precise pronunciation models, several participants turned to online resources including YouTube, Google Translate, and the Cambridge Dictionary. As an illustration, one participant said: *"I check the pronunciation of words using Google Translate. It assists me in fixing my errors."* This finding is consistent with research highlighting the effectiveness of technology in language learning. Digital tools provide pre-service teachers with immediate access to pronunciation models, allowing them to practice independently and at their own pace (Rahman et al., 2024).

The next strategy is imitation and repetition. This study shows that it is common for participants to imitate native speakers in order to practice their pronunciation. One person shared, for instance: *"I mimic native speakers' lip movements from videos and practice in front of the mirror."* This tactic is in line with the audiolingual approach, which highlights imitation and repetition as essential elements of language acquisition (Gamage, 2022). provide pre-service teachers can internalize proper pronunciation patterns by watching and mimicking native speakers.

Another strategy is feedback and peer interaction. In cooperative learning environments, including language exchanges with peers or teachers, corrective feedback was effectively acquired. As one individual noted: *"I practice my English with more experienced speakers. They correct me when I mispronounce terms"*. Peer contact allows provide pre-service teachers to receive immediate feedback and encourages active engagement in the learning process. This study

supports the sociocultural model of language learning, which highlights the importance of social contact in language acquisition (Lantolf et al., 2021).

The eventual strategy is having the knowledge of the Impact of local accents. Participants clearly try to distinguish sounds because they were aware of how their Dayak Kanayant accent affected how they pronounced words in English. One participant, for instance, clarified: We don't have /f/ or /v/ in my language. Every day, I make myself rehearse these noises. To overcome difficulties relating to accents, this understanding is essential. provide Pre-service teachers can concentrate on mastering difficult sounds by pinpointing specific phonetic contrasts between English and their original tongue. This is consistent with studies demonstrating that metalinguistic awareness improves the correctness of pronunciation (Amgott & Gorham, 2023). This metalinguistic awareness not only helps participants identify sound differences but also gives them the awareness to actively develop more effective learning strategies. By continuously practicing difficult sounds, they not only improve their pronunciation, but also build confidence in using English. This shows that metalinguistic awareness is not only theoretical but also has a significant practical impact in the language learning process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reveals the impact of accent on the English pronunciation of Dayak Kanayant pre-service teachers. The findings indicate that consonant errors emerged as the most frequent type of pronunciation mistake among participants. Such errors reveal the challenges these provide pre-service teachers face in articulating English sounds, which may be influenced by the phonetic characteristics of their native accent. Additionally, the study highlights several effective strategies employed by participants to mitigate these pronunciation challenges. Participants utilized a range of approaches, including technology-based resources that offer interactive pronunciation practice, as well as the techniques of imitation and repetition, which enable them to mimic native speakers effectively.

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