



Pronunciation Errors Made by Javanese EFL Learners in Pronouncing English Vowels and Consonants

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-20 Revised: 2026-06-23 Accepted: 2026-06-29 Keywords: Pronunciation Errors, Javanese EFL Learners, Phonological Interference, Qualitative Study DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10712 Corresponding Author: Dilla Maryam dillamaryamm@gmail.com Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo	<i>Accurate pronunciation is essential for effective spoken communication in English; however, many EFL learners continue to experience pronunciation difficulties. Despite previous studies on pronunciation problems, limited research has comprehensively examined the relationship between contributing factors, recurring patterns, and error types among Javanese EFL learners, whose first language presents distinctive phonological differences from English. This qualitative case study investigates pronunciation errors among Javanese EFL learners by examining contributing factors, recurring patterns, and error types. Seven Javanese-speaking EFL learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through pronunciation tasks and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis with data triangulation. The findings reveal that pronunciation errors are influenced by linguistic factors, including first language interference and phonological differences, as well as non-linguistic factors such as limited exposure, lack of practice, low confidence, anxiety, and low motivation. These factors contribute to recurring patterns of substitution, simplification, and avoidance, which are reflected in vowel substitution, diphthong simplification, vowel length confusion, consonant substitution, and voicing errors. The findings contribute to pronunciation teaching by emphasizing explicit instruction, increased exposure, regular practice, and supportive learning environments to improve pronunciation accuracy among Indonesian EFL learners.</i>

1. Introduction

English language learning generally emphasizes the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Among these skills, accurate pronunciation contributes significantly to speech intelligibility and successful oral communication. However, pronunciation is often overlooked in English language teaching due to limited instructional time, leading many learners to perceive it as less important. In fact,

pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of language use, as differences in sound can significantly alter the meaning of words and lead to misunderstanding (Riyani & Istiana Sari, 2020).

English pronunciation involves both segmental features (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation). Many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in producing English sounds accurately because English contains phonological features that differ from their first language (Visoni & Marlina, 2020). In addition, limited pronunciation instruction, insufficient practice opportunities, and low learner motivation further hinder the development of accurate pronunciation (Leonisa, 2020).

In the Indonesian context, particularly among Javanese learners, pronunciation is strongly influenced by the learners' first language. Differences between English and Javanese phonological systems create challenges in producing English sounds accurately (Wardani et al., 2019). Several English phonemes do not exist in Javanese, which leads learners to substitute unfamiliar sounds with more familiar ones. As a result, learners tend to produce recurring pronunciation errors, particularly in vowel and consonant sounds.

Previous studies have consistently shown that pronunciation difficulties among Indonesian EFL learners arise from both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Several studies have reported that first-language interference and phonological differences between English and local languages are the primary linguistic factors affecting learners' pronunciation (Zaeni et al., 2022; Kurniawan & Thren, 2024). Furthermore, limited exposure to authentic English input has been identified as another important factor contributing to inaccurate pronunciation (Octaviani et al., 2024). Insufficient speaking practice also hinders learners from developing accurate pronunciation through repeated production and feedback (Widya et al., 2025).

In addition, psychological factors, such as anxiety, low confidence, and low motivation, have been identified as important non-linguistic influences on learners' pronunciation performance (Novika, 2025). Taken together, these studies suggest that pronunciation difficulties among Indonesian EFL learners are shaped by the interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

Although previous research has suggested that increased exposure through audiovisual media and explicit phonetics instruction can facilitate pronunciation improvement (Gharamah et al., 2024), most previous studies have focused either on contributing factors, general pronunciation difficulties, instructional strategies, or isolated pronunciation errors without providing an integrated analysis of how these aspects interact to produce recurring pronunciation patterns and specific error types. Consequently, little is known about how linguistic and non-linguistic factors interact to shape recurring pronunciation patterns and specific pronunciation error types among Javanese EFL learners.

This study is grounded in two theoretical perspectives: phonological interference and error analysis. Phonological interference explains how learners' first language influences the production of target language sounds, often resulting in systematic deviations from standard pronunciation due to differences in phonological systems. Meanwhile, error analysis provides an analytical framework for identifying, classifying, and interpreting pronunciation errors to reveal underlying learning difficulties and recurring error patterns. By integrating these perspectives, the present study examines pronunciation errors not only as isolated mistakes but also as outcomes of interactions between learners' linguistic background and learning conditions.

Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of pronunciation errors produced by Javanese EFL learners by examining contributing factors, recurring pronunciation patterns, and specific types of pronunciation errors in English vowels and consonants. Accordingly, the research questions are formulated as follows: 1. What factors contribute to pronunciation errors made by Javanese EFL learners?; 2. What patterns of pronunciation errors are produced by Javanese EFL learners?; and 3. What types of pronunciation errors are made by Javanese EFL learners in pronouncing English vowels and consonants?

2. Method

This research employed a qualitative case study design to investigate pronunciation errors among Javanese EFL learners. This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of learners' pronunciation difficulties within a specific learning context.

This study was conducted among students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo. The participants consisted of seven Javanese-speaking EFL learners selected through purposive sampling, a technique that allows researchers to select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Tambunsaribu et al., 2025). The participants were selected based on their status as native Javanese speakers currently learning English and having direct experience in English learning.

This criterion was used to ensure that the data reflected pronunciation errors influenced by the Javanese phonological system. Although the study involved only seven participants, qualitative case study research prioritizes depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization. Therefore, the relatively small number of participants was considered appropriate for obtaining detailed insights into pronunciation difficulties experienced by Javanese EFL learners within the selected context.

Data collection was carried out through pronunciation tasks and semi-structured interviews. In the pronunciation task, participants were asked to read a list of English words containing selected vowel and consonant sounds, including diphthongs, long and short vowels, and consonants that are not present in the Javanese phonological system, such as /θ/ and /ð/. Examples of the words used in the task included *think, this, three, zoo, vision, ship, sheep, photo, great, lodging, and garage*. These words were selected because they contain English sounds that are often challenging for Javanese learners due to differences between English and Javanese phonological systems. The participants' pronunciations were audio-recorded for further analysis.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore learners' perceptions, experiences, and difficulties related to English pronunciation. Semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate because they allow flexibility in exploring participants' perceptions and experiences in greater depth (Waruwu, 2024). This approach emphasizes data richness rather than generalization, enabling the researcher to gain more profound insights into participants' perspectives. The interview questions focused on identifying factors contributing to pronunciation errors, including first language interference, phonological differences, limited exposure, lack of practice, low confidence, anxiety, and motivation.

The obtained data were analyzed through thematic qualitative procedures. The analysis process involved several stages: (1) the recorded pronunciation data was transcribed and examined to identify errors in vowel and consonant production. The pronunciation data were descriptively analyzed using phonological error classification. The errors identified were then classified into several types, including vowel substitution, diphthong simplification, confusion between long and short vowels, consonant substitution, and voicing errors. (2) The pronunciation data were further analyzed to

identify recurring patterns, such as systematic substitution, simplification, and avoidance. (3) The interview data were transcribed, repeatedly read to achieve data familiarization, coded, and categorized into themes representing factors that contribute to pronunciation errors.

Open coding was then conducted to identify meaningful units related to pronunciation difficulties. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories and subsequently organized into themes representing linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The themes were continuously refined through comparison across participants and triangulated with pronunciation task data to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. (4) The findings from both data sources were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of pronunciation errors in terms of their types, patterns, and contributing factors.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing and integrating data obtained from pronunciation tasks and interviews. This triangulation process was used to enhance the credibility and reliability of the data. Furthermore, this study was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and all data were used solely for research purposes.

3. Results

Factors Contributing to Pronunciation Errors

A. Linguistic Factors

First Language (L1) Interference

Interview data revealed that most students relied heavily on their first language when pronouncing English words. Students tended to pronounce English words in the same way they speak in their daily language because it felt more natural. They also experienced difficulty producing certain English sounds because those sounds do not exist in their first language. This pattern indicates that students relied on familiar phonological systems when producing English sounds, making it difficult for them to accurately produce unfamiliar English phonemes. This finding supports the idea that mother tongue interference affects students' English speaking skills, particularly pronunciation (Noviyenty & Putri, 2021). One participant stated:

"I usually pronounce English words the way I speak in my daily language because it feels more natural." (S2)

Another participant stated:

"I find it difficult to pronounce some English sounds because those sounds do not exist in my language." (S4)

This strong reliance on the first language influenced students' pronunciation and limited their ability to produce unfamiliar English sounds accurately.

Phonological Differences

Another significant factor is the difference between the English and Javanese phonological systems. English contains a more complex range of vowel and consonant sounds, including diphthongs, vowel length distinctions, and consonants such as /θ/ and /ð/, which are not present in Javanese. One participant stated:

*"Some English sounds are new to me, so I don't know how to pronounce them correctly."
(S5)*

This finding suggests that phonological differences between English and Javanese increased learners' difficulty in perceiving and producing unfamiliar English sounds accurately.

B. Non-Linguistic Factors

Limited Exposure

Limited exposure to English is another important factor influencing pronunciation errors. Learners who are not frequently exposed to authentic English input have difficulty acquiring accurate pronunciation models. One participant stated:

*"I rarely hear people speaking English, so I don't really know the correct pronunciation."
(S1)*

This finding suggests that limited exposure limited learners' opportunities to hear authentic English pronunciation and develop accurate sound representations.

Lack of Practice

In addition to exposure, lack of practice also contributes to pronunciation errors. Pronunciation is a productive skill that requires continuous practice to develop accuracy and fluency. One participant stated:

"I don't practice speaking English often, so I'm not used to pronouncing the words." (S6)

Limited speaking practice restricted learners' opportunities to refine pronunciation skills through repeated production and feedback.

Low Confidence

Psychological factors, particularly low confidence, also play a significant role in shaping pronunciation performance. One participant stated:

*"I am not confident when I pronounce English words, so I just say them in a simple way."
(S7)*

Low confidence caused learners to prefer simpler pronunciation forms rather than attempting unfamiliar sounds.

Anxiety

Closely related to confidence is the factor of anxiety. Learners often experience fear of making mistakes when speaking English. One participant stated:

"I feel nervous when I speak English, especially when the words are difficult." (S4)

Anxiety caused learners to avoid difficult pronunciations and rely on familiar pronunciation patterns.

Low Motivation

Finally, low motivation also contributes to pronunciation errors. Learners who do not perceive pronunciation as important are less likely to invest effort in improving it. One participant stated:

"I focus more on grammar because pronunciation is not really important in exams." (S3)

Low motivation reduced learners' attention to improving pronunciation and contributed to recurring pronunciation errors.

These factors contributed to recurring patterns of substitution, simplification, and avoidance, which subsequently manifested in specific pronunciation error types, including vowel substitution, diphthong simplification, vowel length confusion, consonant substitution, and voicing errors.

Pattern of Pronunciation Errors

Recurring Substitution Pattern

One of the most prominent pronunciation patterns identified in this study is sound substitution. Learners consistently replace specific English sounds with the same alternative sounds across different words and contexts. One participant stated:

"I always pronounce 'th' as /t/ because I don't know how to say it." (S1)

For example, the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ were commonly replaced with /t/, which is available in the learners' first language. Similar substitution patterns were also observed across multiple participants, indicating that these pronunciation patterns were shared rather than individual.

Simplification Pattern

Another important pattern observed in this study is phonological simplification. Learners tended to simplify complex sounds into easier forms in order to reduce articulatory effort. This pattern appeared in the reduction of diphthongs into monophthongs and in replacing unfamiliar consonants with simpler alternatives. One participant stated:

"I usually change difficult sounds into easier ones so I can pronounce them quickly." (S2)

Avoidance Pattern

In addition to substitution and simplification, the findings also suggest the presence of an avoidance pattern. Learners tend to avoid producing difficult sounds by replacing them with easier alternatives or by modifying the word structure. One participant stated:

"I feel nervous when I say difficult words, so I just make them easier." (S7)

Types of Pronunciation Errors

The analysis identified several types of pronunciation errors in learners' production of English vowels and consonants. These errors reflect specific areas of difficulty in both vowel and consonant systems. Among the identified error categories, consonant substitution and vowel-related modifications were commonly observed in the data.

Vowel Substitution

Table 1. Vowel Substitution Errors

No	English Vowel	Modification	Word
1	/ɒ/ mid back rounded vowel	/ɔ/ or /o/ mid back rounded vowel	lodging
2	/æ/ low front unrounded vowel	/ɑ:/ low back unrounded vowel	garage

Learners tended to replace unfamiliar vowel sounds with similar and more familiar alternatives, particularly when the target vowel was difficult to perceive and produce accurately (Luh et al., 2024).

"I pronounce 'lodging' using /o/ because it is easier." (S3)

This error affected pronunciation clarity and intelligibility.

Diphthong Simplification

Table 2. Diphthong Simplification Errors

No	English Vowel	Modification	Word
1	/əʊ/ diphthong (mid-central to high-back rounded vowel)	/o/ mid back rounded vowel	photo
2	/eɪ/ diphthong	/e/ monophthong	great

Learners often simplified diphthongs into monophthongs, reducing vowel movement into a single sound during pronunciation (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024). For example:

"I say 'photo' as /poto/." (S2)

This simplification resulted in non-standard pronunciation.

Confusion Between Long and Short Vowels

Table 3. Confusion Between Long and Short Vowels

No	English Vowel	Modification	Word
1	/ɪ/ high front lax unrounded vowel	/i:/ high front unrounded vowel	ship
2	/i:/ high front unrounded vowel	/ɪ/ high front lax unrounded vowel	sheep

Learners frequently fail to distinguish between long and short vowels. In English, vowel length differentiates meaning, but learners experienced difficulty distinguishing vowel length contrasts (Tahang et al., 2024). One student explained:

"I say 'ship' and 'sheep' the same." (S1)

This error affected pronunciation intelligibility.

Consonant Substitution

Table 4. Consonant Substitution Errors

No	English Consonants	Modification	Word
1	/θ/ voiceless dental fricative	/t/ voiceless alveolar plosive	think
2	/θ/ voiceless dental fricative	/f/ voiceless labiodental fricative	three
3	/ð/ voiced dental fricative	/d/ voiced alveolar plosive	this

Consonant substitution was frequently identified, particularly in the production of dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. For example:

"I say 'this' as /dis/." (S4)

This pronunciation change reduced speech clarity.

Voicing Errors

Table 5. Voicing Errors

No	English Consonants	Modification	Word
1	/z/ voiced alveolar fricative	/s/ voiceless alveolar fricative	zoo
2	/ʒ/ voiced postalveolar fricative	/s/ voiceless alveolar fricative	vision

Learners also confused voiced and voiceless consonants, resulting in inaccurate pronunciation of several English words. One student stated:

"I say 'zoo' as /su:/." (S6)

These errors affected pronunciation intelligibility.

Overall, the identified pronunciation errors indicate that learners experienced greater difficulty producing unfamiliar English vowel and consonant sounds, particularly those absent from their first language.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that pronunciation errors among Javanese EFL learners are closely shaped by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. These findings answer the three research questions by showing how underlying factors shape error patterns, which are then reflected in specific types of pronunciation errors. These findings are consistent with previous studies in EFL contexts, indicating that pronunciation difficulties may reflect shared linguistic and phonological characteristics among learners (Tusino, 2026).

The analysis initially reveals that linguistic factors, particularly first language (L1) interference and phonological differences, play a central role in shaping pronunciation errors among Javanese learners. These findings suggest that learners' pronunciation difficulties are rooted in the transfer of previously established phonological habits, making unfamiliar English sounds difficult to internalize accurately.

This finding is consistent with previous research showing that L1 transfer strongly influences second language pronunciation (Dmitrieva et al., 2020). The findings reveal that pronunciation difficulties among Javanese learners are not simply temporary learning mistakes but may continue to occur as learners repeatedly rely on familiar pronunciation habits during English production. Similar patterns have also been reported in Indonesian EFL contexts, where learners substitute English phonemes due to native language influence (Prasetyo et al., 2014).

The absence of several English phonemes in the Javanese sound system appears to increase learners' perceptual and articulatory burden, which may help explain why segmental pronunciation errors may remain challenging despite formal English instruction. This result is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that unfamiliar sounds create both perceptual and articulatory challenges for EFL learners (Yulianti et al., 2025), as well as contrastive phonological research showing that differences in sound systems significantly affect learners' pronunciation accuracy (Ismahani et al., 2025).

In addition to linguistic influences, non-linguistic factors such as limited exposure, lack of practice, low confidence, anxiety, and low motivation further reinforce pronunciation errors among Javanese EFL learners. These findings imply that pronunciation accuracy develops gradually through repeated exposure, active oral engagement, and supportive learning environments rather than through theoretical knowledge alone. A recent Indonesian study found that limited exposure to English significantly affects pronunciation development and contributes to ongoing pronunciation difficulties (Idrus et al., 2025).

This suggests that pronunciation improvement requires consistent exposure and regular speaking practice to strengthen learners' pronunciation accuracy. In addition, psychological factors play a significant role. Learners who experience anxiety and low confidence tend to avoid producing difficult sounds, which limits their pronunciation development. This finding is in line with previous studies highlighting the negative impact of anxiety on speaking performance (Sutarsyah, 2017) and is further supported by recent research indicating that learners' perceptions and emotional factors influence their pronunciation performance (Novika, 2025). As a result, learners often rely on simplified forms, which reinforces incorrect pronunciation patterns and contributes to ongoing errors.

Third, the interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic factors leads to the emergence of recurring pronunciation patterns, which subsequently manifest in specific pronunciation error types. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on isolated pronunciation problems, this study highlights the interconnected relationship between contributing factors, recurring patterns, and specific pronunciation error types among Javanese EFL learners. The recurring error patterns indicate that learners tend to prioritize articulatory convenience and communicative fluency over phonological precision when producing unfamiliar English sounds.

This persistence may occur because learners repeatedly receive reinforcement from their immediate linguistic environment, where similar pronunciation patterns are commonly shared among speakers with the same first-language background. Consequently, pronunciation deviations may become habitual and persist despite formal English instruction, suggesting that pronunciation errors are shaped not only by individual learning processes but also by broader linguistic and social environments.

These recurring tendencies are further reflected in the types of pronunciation errors identified in this study, including vowel substitution, diphthong simplification, vowel length confusion, consonant substitution, and voicing errors. These error types demonstrate how phonological background and learning conditions interact in shaping learners'

pronunciation performance. The findings suggest that pronunciation errors are associated with multiple interacting factors rather than isolated difficulties. These results are consistent with previous studies on EFL pronunciation, which highlight substitution and simplification as dominant error types (Giri, 2024), and are also in line with recent research on Indonesian EFL learners that identifies similar patterns of pronunciation errors (Reskiawan et al., 2026).

Overall, the findings suggest that pronunciation errors among Javanese EFL learners are systematic phenomena shaped by the interaction between phonological background and learning conditions. This implies that pronunciation instruction should address not only sound production but also learners' exposure, confidence, and speaking habits. These findings highlight the need for instructional approaches that integrate pronunciation practice with broader learning and psychological support.

From a pedagogical perspective, teachers should not only correct errors but also address their underlying causes. Providing explicit instruction on problematic sounds, increasing exposure to authentic English input, offering more opportunities for speaking practice, and building learners' confidence are essential strategies for improving pronunciation accuracy. In addition, creating a supportive learning environment is important to reduce anxiety and encourage active oral participation.

Despite these findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study involved only seven participants from a single university, which limits the transferability of the findings. Second, the study focused primarily on segmental pronunciation features and did not examine suprasegmental aspects such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Although this study identified various pronunciation error types, it did not quantify the frequency of each error because the primary focus was to explore the factors, patterns, and characteristics of pronunciation difficulties through qualitative analysis. Future research may involve a larger number of participants from different educational contexts and explore additional pronunciation features to provide a more comprehensive understanding of pronunciation difficulties among Indonesian EFL learners.

Overall, these findings highlight that pronunciation difficulties among Javanese EFL learners are shaped by interacting linguistic and non-linguistic factors, indicating the need for more comprehensive pronunciation instruction in EFL contexts.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated pronunciation difficulties experienced by Javanese EFL learners by identifying the contributing factors, pronunciation patterns, and types of errors. The findings indicate that pronunciation difficulties are influenced by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Linguistic factors include first language interference and phonological differences between English and Javanese, while non-linguistic factors include limited exposure, lack of practice, low confidence, anxiety, and low motivation.

The study also identified recurring pronunciation patterns, including substitution, simplification, and avoidance, which were reflected in several pronunciation error types such as vowel substitution, diphthong simplification, confusion between long and short vowels, consonant substitution, and voicing errors. These findings suggest that pronunciation accuracy is influenced by learners' phonological backgrounds and learning experiences.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of addressing both phonological and psychological dimensions in pronunciation instruction. Providing explicit pronunciation instruction, increasing exposure to authentic English input, encouraging regular speaking practice, and creating supportive learning environments may help improve learners' pronunciation accuracy and communicative competence.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed. For English teachers, it is important to provide explicit pronunciation instruction, particularly for English sounds that are absent from learners' first language. Teachers are also encouraged to increase students' exposure to authentic English input and provide more opportunities for speaking practice in supportive classroom environments to reduce anxiety and improve pronunciation performance.

For students, regular practice and active exposure to English through audiovisual media, conversations, and pronunciation-focused activities are recommended to improve pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence.

For future researchers, further studies are recommended to involve larger and more diverse participant groups to obtain broader findings. Future research may also explore suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, or investigate the effectiveness of specific pronunciation teaching strategies in improving learners' pronunciation performance.

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