



# Journal of Educational Sciences

Journal homepage: <https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES>



P-ISSN  
2581-1657

E-ISSN  
2581-2203

## An Analysis of Madurese Language Interference in the English Pronunciation of EFL Students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung

Muhammad Rikwan\*, Widya Oktarini, Kristi Nuraini

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Jember, 68124, Indonesia

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 22 Nov 2025

Revised: 19 Des 2025

Accepted: 24 Des 2025

Published online: 05 Jan 2026

#### Keywords:

Madurese Language Interference,  
Pronunciation,  
Phonological Transfer,  
EFL Learners

#### \* Corresponding author:

E-mail: muhammadridwan1433@gmail.com

#### Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.1.p.1463-1472>

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze and describe the forms of Madurese language interference on the pronunciation skills of EFL students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung. The study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that Madurese language interference appears predominantly in the phonological aspect, especially in the form of consonant substitution (/v/ to /f/, /ʃ/ to /s/, and /θ/ to /t/), difficulty in distinguishing long and short vowels, omission of final consonants, rigid and monotonous intonation. This pattern of errors indicates phonological transfer from the mother tongue, which affects students' English pronunciation. These findings support the theory of language transfer, which states that the sound system of the first language influences the production of sounds in the second language. Pedagogically, these research results emphasize the importance of phonetic awareness-based pronunciation learning strategies and sound contrast exercises to reduce the influence of the mother tongue and improve students' pronunciation accuracy.

## 1. Introduction

In learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), students are required to master four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, speaking is considered one of the most important yet challenging, as it requires the simultaneous integration of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical competence, pronunciation accuracy, and real-time language production (Lestari et al., 2024). Many Indonesian students experience difficulties in speaking English fluently due to limited vocabulary, pronunciation problems, and challenges in constructing grammatically correct sentences (Ihsan & Wahidah, 2018).

For students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung, the challenges in speaking English are more complex due to their sociolinguistic environment. Most students grow up in a community where Madurese is used as the primary language of daily communication. Madurese is not only a medium of interaction but also an integral part of local culture. Consequently, students have limited exposure to English outside formal classroom settings and tend to rely heavily on their mother tongue. This condition often results in English pronunciation and intonation patterns that are influenced by the Madurese accent.

Such difficulties can be explained through the phenomenon of language interference, which refers to the transfer of linguistic elements from the first language (L1) into the use of a second language (L2) (O'Reilly & Roberts, 2025). Language interference may affect various aspects of language use, including phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. In terms of pronunciation, students frequently encounter problems when producing English sounds that do not exist in Madurese. As a result, they tend to substitute unfamiliar English phonemes with the closest sounds available in their mother tongue. For instance, students often pronounce the word "very" using the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ instead of the voiced labiodental fricative /v/, resulting in the pronunciation "fery" (Mufidah & Rabbianty, 2021).

Previous studies have widely examined the speaking difficulties experienced by EFL learners. Maji et al. (2022) found that students' speaking problems were mainly caused by a lack of vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, and weak grammatical mastery. Their study revealed that 88.8% of students experienced difficulties due to limited vocabulary, while 55.5% faced problems in pronouncing English words. Other studies focusing on regional language interference, particularly Javanese and Sundanese, also confirmed that differences in phonological systems between local languages and English significantly affect students' English pronunciation and spelling (Arrum et al., 2022). However, research that specifically examines the phonological characteristics of Madurese and their interference with English pronunciation remains limited, especially at the junior high school level. This indicates a clear research gap that warrants further investigation.

In the broader context, mastery of English has become increasingly important in the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement. English learning in Indonesia does not occur solely within formal educational settings but is also shaped by students' social, cultural, and linguistic environments. Ilmita, Setyaningsih, and Putra (2025) demonstrated that Indonesian EFL learners actively use English in social media contexts; however, their language use is still strongly influenced by their native language, particularly in terms of structure and pronunciation.

Alongside this, various innovations in English language teaching continue to be developed to improve learners' competence. Islami et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of technology integration, innovative assessment, and adaptive teaching strategies in enhancing the quality of English education in Indonesian higher

---

education. Similarly, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been shown to positively impact English speaking ability, particularly in improving fluency and learners' confidence (Mardhiah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, regardless of technological advancements and instructional innovations, the influence of learners' mother tongue remains a fundamental linguistic factor that cannot be ignored.

Mother tongue interference has been identified as one of the main challenges in English language learning in Indonesia. Budiharto and Rokhmawati (2025) emphasized that Indonesian learners' first language significantly affects the acquisition of English linguistic elements, especially phonology. This interference often results in systematic pronunciation errors, particularly when learners encounter English sounds that do not exist in their regional languages. At the junior high school level, teaching approaches such as Task-Based Instruction have proven effective in increasing student engagement and improving English language proficiency (Sari et al., 2024). However, the success of such instructional methods is still influenced by students' linguistic backgrounds. In areas where a specific regional language dominates daily communication, such as Madurese, phonological interference may strongly affect students' English pronunciation, particularly at the beginner level.

SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung, located in a predominantly Madurese-speaking environment, faces this linguistic reality. Students who use Madurese as their first language tend to transfer the phonological features of Madurese into their English pronunciation. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the forms and patterns of Madurese language interference in students' English pronunciation is essential. Based on the above considerations, this study aims to analyze Madurese language interference in the English pronunciation of EFL students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung. Specifically, this research seeks to identify and examine the phonological patterns of Madurese interference that influence students' English pronunciation. By addressing the limited focus on Madurese language interference in previous studies, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the field of applied linguistics, particularly in phonological interference studies, and practically to English language teaching by providing insights for more contextual and linguistically responsive instructional strategies.

## **2. Methodology**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to describe or describe thoroughly and in-depth describe the form of madurese language interference that appears when speaking English by students. This method is suitable for focusing on phenomena that emphasize meaning, processes, and linguistic symptoms in the natural context of regional language interference studies (Mujtaba et al., 2023). This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung, Lumajang Regency, East Java, from January to March 2025 during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung was selected as the research location because most of the students were native speakers of

---

Madurese who were actively learning English. The participants consisted of 50 ninth-grade students (25 males and 25 females) who were deliberately selected based on their active involvement in English language learning activities in class and their background as native speakers of Madurese (Fakhrudin et al., 2020).

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Classroom observation was conducted to identify errors in pronunciation that arose when students spoke in English, particularly in phonological aspects such as consonant pronunciation, vowel length, and word stress. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and English teachers to explore the factors that cause pronunciation difficulties. Documentation in the form of transcripts of speaking activities, teacher notes, and video recordings of lessons were used as supporting data (Rahajeng NH et al., 2024).

In this study, the researchers acted as the main instrument, supported by observation sheets, interview guidelines, and field notes to ensure data consistency (Moleong, 2019). Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles (2014), which consists of data reduction through transcription and coding of pronunciation errors, data presentation by categorizing forms of phonological interference, and drawing conclusions regarding the influence of Madurese phonological features on English pronunciation. This analytical process, along with the application of triangulation and member checking to ensure data validity (Mahendra & Marantika, 2020; Morgan, 2024), is systematically illustrated in Figure 1 as the final stage of the research flowchart.



Figure 1. Research Methodology Flowchart

### 3. Results and Discussion

After conducting interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, the researchers found that Madurese language interference was most prominent in students' English pronunciation. The majority of students consistently produced phonological errors, indicating a strong influence of their first language sound system. One of the most noticeable patterns of interference was the substitution of English consonant sounds that do not exist in Madurese with phonetically similar sounds from their native language. Examples of these consonant pronunciation errors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of Phonological

English Sound	Example Word	Common Student Pronunciation	Description of Interference
/v/	Very	/f/ (fery)	/v/ replaced by /f/, a closer native sound
/ʃ/	She	/s/ (si)	/ʃ/ simplified to /s/
/θ/	Think	/t/ (tink)	/θ/ replaced by /t/

The data in Table 1 show that these phonological errors occur repeatedly and are produced by most students. This pattern suggests that students rely heavily on the Madurese sound system as their primary reference when pronouncing English words, particularly when encountering unfamiliar consonant sounds. In addition to consonant interference, students also experienced difficulties in pronouncing English vowels, especially in distinguishing between long and short vowel sounds. Many students pronounced pairs of words such as ship and sheep identically, without any contrast in vowel length. Examples of vowel pronunciation errors related to vowel length distinction are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of Students' Vowel Pronunciation Errors

No	English Word 1	English Word 2	Students' Pronunciation Error	Brief Explanation
1	Ship	Sheep	Pronounced the same without vowel length difference	Students do not distinguish between short vowel /ɪ/ and long vowel /i:/
2	Sit	Seat	Same as the previous example	Difficulty distinguishing between short /ɪ/ and long /i:/
3	Full	Fool	Pronounced the same without vowel distinction	Do not distinguish between short vowel /ʊ/ and long vowel /u:/

The vowel pronunciation errors shown in Table 2 can be explained by the characteristics of the Madurese vowel system, in which vowel length does not function as a meaning differentiator. As a result, students tend to perceive vowel length differences in English as unimportant. Consequently, their ability to naturally distinguish between long and short vowels does not develop, which may lead to misunderstandings in communication.

Another form of phonological interference identified in this study is the deletion of final consonants in English words. Students frequently omitted consonants at the end of words, even though final consonants play a crucial role in distinguishing meaning in English. Examples of final consonant deletion found in student pronunciation are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of Final Consonant Deletion in Student Pronunciation

No	English Word	Common Student Pronunciation	Type of Interference	Explanation
1	Want	Wan	Final consonant deletion	The final consonant /t/ is omitted
2	Bag	Ba	Final consonant deletion	The final consonant /g/ is omitted

As demonstrated in Table 3, students tend to weaken or ignore final consonant sounds. This phenomenon further indicates the influence of Madurese phonological rules, which generally allow more limited use of final consonants compared to English. The transfer of this feature contributes significantly to pronunciation errors and may affect intelligibility in spoken English. Furthermore, Intonation also displays a very strong impact from the Madurese language. Based on observations, students' English pronunciation often sounds stiff, flat, and monotonous. The characteristic Madurese prosody pattern, which is firm and tends to be flat, carries over when students try to speak English, making their intonation sound unnatural. The English teachers interviewed emphasized that even though students had been given pronunciation exercises repeatedly, these intonation patterns remained difficult to change. The teachers also added that pronunciation errors related to English phonology tended to occur consistently, both in formal speaking assignments and in everyday classroom conversations.

An interview with an English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung revealed that the main challenge students face in speaking English is pronunciation, which is significantly influenced by their Madurese language background. The teacher explained that the majority of students consistently substitute English sounds that do not exist in Madurese for example, /v/ is replaced with /f/, /ʃ/ with /s/, and /θ/ with /t/ resulting in pronunciations such as *fery*, *si*, and *tink*. These errors persist because students frequently use Madurese in everyday communication and rarely hear native English pronunciation, making it difficult for them to master new phonetic patterns. The teacher also noted that students often fail to distinguish between long and short vowels, such as "ship" and "sheep," because there is no distinction between vowel lengths in the Madurese sound system. Despite regular pronunciation practice, students typically revert to their natural phonological habits when speaking spontaneously. The teacher emphasized that limited exposure to English outside the classroom and strong L1 interference were the main reasons why these pronunciation problems remained difficult to correct.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the phonological system of the Madurese language, both in terms of sound inventory and prosody, has a significant

influence on students' English pronunciation skills. This interference does not only occur sporadically, but also becomes a consistent pattern, so it can be concluded that the mother tongue plays a very dominant role in shaping the way student.

### ***Discussion***

The results of this study found that Madurese language interference had a very strong influence on the pronunciation skills of EFL students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung. The most common pronunciation errors include substituting foreign consonant sounds, difficulty distinguishing between long and short vowels, omitting final consonants, and incorrect intonation and word stress. This phenomenon is consistent with language transfer theory (Ellis & Wulff, n.d.) which explains that the first language (L1) has great potential to influence second language acquisition (L2), especially in terms of phonology.

Sound substitutions such as /v/ becoming /f/ (e.g., very is pronounced as fery), /ʃ/ becoming /s/ (she is pronounced as si), or /θ/ becoming /t/ (think is pronounced as tink), indicate that students are replacing unfamiliar sounds with sounds that are closer to those in their native language phonological system. This is consistent with research (Mufidah & Rabbianty, 2021) Which found that Indonesian students' pronunciation errors are generally caused by a limited phoneme inventory in regional languages. Furthermore, Major (2014) also emphasizes that phonological interference tends to occur when there are significant contrasts in sound between L1 and L2.

Difficulty in distinguishing between long and short vowels, for example in the pairs ship and sheep, shows that the Madurese language vowel system, which does not recognize vowel quantity differences, has a direct implication on pronunciation errors. These findings support Arrum et al. (2022) which shows that the difference in the vocal systems between Javanese and English is one of the main causes of mispronunciation. Meanwhile, research (Flege, 1995) The Speech Learning Model also explains that when two vocal systems differ, students tend to assimilate L2 sounds into the closest L1 sound category, resulting in mispronunciation.

The phenomenon of consonant loss at the end of words, such as want becoming wan or bag becoming ba, also reflects the impact of Madurese phonotactic patterns.(O'reilly & Roberts, 2025) explains that the phonotactic structure of L1 is often carried over when speaking in L2, especially if the mother tongue does not retain consonants at the end of words. Similar studies by (Diniarti, 2017) in the context of Malay language interference also found the same pattern, where students tend to ignore final consonants that are uncommon in their regional languages.

In addition, inappropriate intonation and stress placement indicate that Madurese prosody has been carried over into English. (NH et al., 2024)found that regional language intonation significantly affects students' fluency in speaking, even after training. This phenomenon is also consistent with the findings of Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), who found that prosodic errors are one of the most difficult aspects to

---

overcome in pronunciation learning, as they are directly related to long-term phonological habits from the native language.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce previous studies that highlight phonological interference from regional languages in Indonesia, such as Javanese and Sundanese. (Arrum et al., 2022) while also contributing to the literature by specifically examining the influence of Madurese, which has been rarely studied. Thus, the results of this study not only confirm the theory of language transfer and previous findings, but also expand our understanding of how the phonological characteristics of Madurese directly impact EFL students' difficulties in pronouncing English

#### 4. Conclusion

This study concludes that Madurese language interference has a strong influence on the pronunciation skills of EFL students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagung. The most dominant errors include substitution of foreign consonant sounds such as /v/ being replaced by /f/ (e.g., very pronounced as fery), /ʃ/ replaced by /s/ (she pronounced as si), and /θ/ replaced by /t/ (think pronounced as tink) as well as difficulty distinguishing between long and short vowels, omission of final consonants, and inappropriate intonation and word stress. This pattern of errors indicates phonological transfer from the mother tongue, which consistently affects English speech production. These findings support the theory of language transfer (Flege, 1995) and reinforce previous research on phonological interference among native Indonesian speakers. Pedagogically, these results emphasize the need for a pronunciation teaching approach that focuses on phonetic awareness and contrastive sound practice so that students can overcome the influence of their native language and improve their pronunciation accuracy in English.

#### References

- Arrum, R. S., Djatmika, & Sawardi, F. X. (2022). Interferensi Bahasa Jawa Pada Ejaan Bahasa Inggris Pada Teks Narasi Oleh Anak-Anak Penutur Asli Jawa. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik Dan Sastra (SEMANTIKS)*, 4(4).
- Budiharto, R. A., & Rokhmawati, D. (2025). Investigating Mother Tongue Effect In The Acquisition Of English Prepositions By Indonesia-Speaking Learners. *Journal Of Educational Sciences*, 7(1), 95–109. <https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.7.1.p.95-109>
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., Goodwin, J. M., & Griner, B. (2010). *Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book And Reference Guide* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Diniarti, D. A., Amrulloh, & Syahdan. (2017). Interferensi Bahasa Melayu Terhadap Bahasa Indonesia Pada TKI Di Dusun Getap Kecamatan Suralaga (Kajian Sociolinguistik). *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia*, 1(2), 205–221.
-

- Ellis, N. C., & Wulff, S. (n.d.). *Cognitive Linguistics: A Survey Of Linguistic Subfields* (E. Dąbrowska & D. Divjak, Eds.). De Gruyter Mouton.
- Fakhrudin, M. A., Suhartiningsih, S., Utama, F. S., Satrijono, H., & Nurdianasari, N. (2020). Campur Kode Bahasa Madura Terhadap Bahasa Indonesia Dalam Karangan Narasi Sugestif Siswa Kelas V SD. *Jurnal Edukasi Khatulistiwa: Pembelajaran Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 3(2), 71. <https://doi.org/10.26418/ekha.v3i2.41617>
- Flege, J. E. (1995). *Second Language Speech Learning: Theory, Findings, And Problems*. York Press.
- Ihsan, H. Z., & Wahidah, N. (2018). Teacher's Efforts To Overcome Students' Difficulties In Speaking Ability. *Voices Of English Language Education Society*, 2(1), 62–67.
- Ilmita, A. N., Setyaningsih, E., & Putra, K. A. (2025). Indonesian EFL Learners' English Language Learning And Use In Social Media: A Case Study. *Journal Of Educational Sciences*, 9(2), 758–781. <https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.2.p.758-781>
- Islami, A. P., Putri, S. A., & Hasibuan, H. N. H. (2025). Exploring Innovations In Teaching, Assessment, And Technology For English Language Education In Indonesian Tertiary Education. *Journal Of Educational Sciences*, 9(6), 5452–5465. <https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.6.p.5452-5465>
- Lestari, L. D. A., Hidayati, K. H., & Laeli, A. F. (2024). Exploring The Level Of Self-Confidence Among Students With Different Speaking Performance. *Celtic: A Journal Of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature And Linguistics*, 11(2), 377–386. <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v11i2.32429>
- Mahendra, M. W., & Marantika, I. M. Y. (2020). The Phonological Interference In EFL Reading. *Elite: Journal Of English Language, Literature, And Teaching*, 5(1), 27–34. <https://doi.org/10.32528/elite.v5i1.3272>
- Maji, E., Samanhudi, U., & Mokoagouw, M. E. (2022). Students' Difficulties In Speaking English: A Case Study In SMKN 3 Sorong. *Journal*, 5(1).
- Major, R. C. (2014). *Foreign Accent: The Ontogeny And Phylogeny Of Second Language Phonology*. Psychology Press.
- Mardhiah, A., Hajar, I., Purwati, D., Muna, H., & Ariani, R. (2025). Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) To Enhance Teachers' Spoken English At An Islamic Boarding School. *Journal Of Educational Sciences*, 9(6), 5163–5176. <https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.6.p.5163-5176>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Moleong, L. J. (2019). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Revised ed.). PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Morgan, H. (2024). Using Triangulation And Crystallization To Make Qualitative Studies Trustworthy And Rigorous. *The Qualitative Report*, 29(7), 1844–1856. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2024.6071>
- Mufidah, I., & Rabbianty, E. N. (2021). An Analysis Of Madurese Dialect In The English Conversation By The Members Of Bata-Bata English Centre (BBEC). *Panyonara: Journal Of English Education*, 3(2), 101–121. <https://doi.org/10.19105/panyonara.v3i2.5085>
-

- Mujtaba, N., Fizriyani, W., Fibiani, M., & Nurhayani, I. (2023). Back Vowel Interference Of Madurese To English Language Pronunciation. *Jurnal Kata*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.22216/kata.v7i1.1925>
- Nh, S. R., Gayatri, R., & Hariro, Z. (2024). Interferensi Fonologis Bahasa Indonesia Oleh Pemelajar BIPA Level 4 Di Kota Mataram (Analisis Fonologi Generatif). *Mabasan*, 18(2), 365–380. <https://doi.org/10.62107/mab.v18i2.984>
- O'Reilly, J., & Roberts, L. (2025). How Acquirable Are English Articles For L2 Learners? Evidence From Online Processing And Production By L1-Mandarin And L1-Croatian Speakers Of L2-English. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716425000104>
- Sari, I. P., Kurniawan, J., Deswarni, D., Setiawati, S., Parlina, I., & Htun, K. W. W. (2024). Investigating The Efficacy Of Task-Based Instruction In English Classrooms For Tenth Grade Students At Madrasah Aliyah Hubbulwathan Duri. *Journal Of Education And Learning Research*, 2(1), 28–33. <https://doi.org/10.62208/jelr.2.1.p.28-33>

How to cite this article:

Rikwan, M., Oktarini, W., & Nuraini, K. (2026). An Analysis of Madurese Language Interference in the English Pronunciation of EFL Students at SMP Negeri 1 Randuagun. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(1), 1463-1472.

---