

## From Madura to English: Suprasegmental Interference in Language Learning

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### Abstract:

This study aims to identify the Madurese language interference in speaking English focusing on suprasegmental features encompassed intonation, stress, and rhythm. Madura is an island in east Java which the people mostly possess a unique accent of *Bahasa Madura*. This distinct effect of their mother tongue is evident when they speak another language. Thus, the research sought to understand the specific ways or the pattern the interference manifests. The research is a descriptive field study which initially relied on an English speech a Madurese distinguished politician, which qualitatively identified the mis-stressing placement, pronunciation, and intonation errors. Afterwards, the same text of the speech was given to 5 Madurese students which possibly made comparative analysis of their speech patterns. The results indicated a prevalent pattern of stress misplacement, particularly in the second syllable, which often occurred in the final and medial positions of words. This finding suggests that the Madurese language significantly impacts intonation and stress placement, particularly at the ends of words, along with mispronunciation influences.

**Keywords:** language interference; Madurese; suprasegmental

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi interferensi bahasa Madura dalam kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris, berfokus pada aspek suprasegmental seperti intonasi, penekanan, dan ritme. Madura adalah sebuah pulau di Jawa Timur yang umumnya orang di sana memiliki aksen yang unik dari Bahasa Madura. Pengaruh aksen yang jelas ini dapat terlihat saat mereka berbicara Bahasa berbeda. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mencoba untuk memahami secara spesifik perwujudan dari keterpengaruhannya tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan yang pertamanya berdasarkan pada pidato berbahasa Inggris oleh seorang politisi ternama Madura, yang diidentifikasi secara kualitatif kesalahan penempatan penekanan, pengucapan, dan intonasi. Setelah itu, teks yang sama dari pidato tersebut diberikan kepada 5 siswa Madura sehingga dapat dilakukan analisa komparasi. Hasilnya menunjukkan pola kesalahan penempatan tekanan yang lazim, terutama pada suku kata kedua, yang sering terjadi pada posisi akhir dan medial kata. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa bahasa Madura secara signifikan mempengaruhi intonasi dan penempatan tekanan, terutama di akhir kata, bersama dengan kesalahan pengucapan.

**Kata kunci:** interferensi bahasa; bahasa Madura; suprasegmental

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a multilingual country, has quite complex problems that are not experienced by monolingual nations (Rani & Akhter Tina, 2020). Despite Bahasa Indonesia as the lingua franca, the respective languages appear in each region. There are approximately 718 languages spread out across the nation according to Badan Bahasa Kemendikbud RI (Sadya, 2022). Of these, 90% are located in eastern Indonesia, with 428 in Papua, 80 in Maluku, 72 in East Nusa Tenggara, and 62 in Sulawesi (Sadya, 2022). English position in this country is only as a foreign language (Cahyani & Kresna, 2023).

Becoming a lesson compulsory in the country's statutory curriculum, the language has been learned from children, but the lack of practice makes such learning in lower success rate. Based on the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI, 2022), Indonesia is classified as having "low proficiency", ranked 62nd out of 100 countries surveyed in 2022. With this data in mind, the study of interlanguage transfer/interference in Indonesia represents a prominent subject to discuss. Yuliati (2014) stated, in "countries where English is used as a foreign language, the tendency to produce phonological or grammatical errors is high." The reason is because of the limitation of space in using English for communication. The learners might find "difficulties and then produce pronunciation/phonological errors due to the absence of some English sounds in their mother tongue" (Gunawan, 2014).

Prior researchers agreed speaking ability could be the greatest challenge for ESL speakers (Rajendran & Md Yunus, 2021; John et al., 2021; Kehing & Yunus, 2021; Kehing et al., 2021). The mother tongues have a certain influence on the way speakers acquire their English. When these native languages affect the process, this phenomenon is called interference (Thyab, 2016). The interference, according to Chomsky and Morris, could be seen from the language transfers. The negative errors are part in which the L2 speakers bring their natural based language knowledge to adjust. Thus, the researcher undertakes to reveal the result by portraying the errors of research subjects.

One of the subjects of the research is an Indonesian politician and lawyer, originally from Sampang Regency, East Java, Indonesia. He/she was Madurese descent and youngest professor ever to serve as Minister of Defense in 2001 (VOI, 2020). He/she is also ever serving as the coordinating minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs of

Indonesia and Acting Minister of Communication. Beside these phenomenal attainments, however, he/she has still unique tonal and intonational patterns sustained throughout his/her discourse. The intonation includes in part of suprasegmental within the broader domain of prosodic attributes, standing with syllables, stress placement, and rhythm (Goswami, 2020; Veenendaal et al., 2017). By mean of suprasegmental study, the researcher focused on those mentioned parts. The suprasegmental could be seen through how were the intonation patterns, stress placement, and rhythm of the speaker (Tolibovna, 2023).

Several studies have tried to reveal language interference and most focused on segmental analysis. For instance, Mahendra and Marantika (2020) examined the phonological errors of eight Madurese Pendalungan at a private university in East Java. The data was analyzed in the sense of segmental part and found pronunciation errors in the form of sound replacement were the most dominant. Scoping in the same segmental issues, another was conducted by Gunawan (2014). He examined the phonological errors of Madurese EFL adult learners and found 366 mistakes. By qualitative descriptive, he concludes, “Madurese, still influence the subject in pronouncing English word.”

To date, the study of language interference has been going extensively appealing. However, the samples focussed on the suprasegmental features are hardly taken from Madura’s intrusion. Those are taken from Student’s in Surabaya (Laila & Leliana, 2022), in Yogyakarta (Suciati & Diyanti, 2021), and Semarang (Ardini & Sunowarsito, 2023). Meanwhile, the disparity of the Madurese still presents an intriguing subject to explore, putting attention to their distinctive tonal and intonational utterances. Madurese-English interferences are such appealing study cases, in which prosodic spoken quite strongly represents the characteristics of region.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

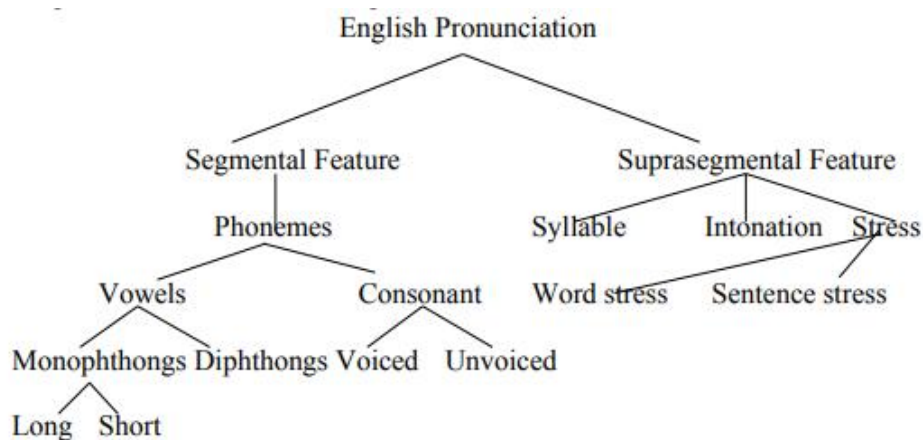
### Interference

In the sense of ‘interference’, suprasegmental could be seen throughout the concept of language transfers. Refers to Dulay and Burt (1976), the term ‘interference’ defined as “the automatic transfer, due to habit of the surface structure of the first language into the surface of the target language” (cited in Goswami, 2020). The interference happens when the negative transfer of L1 assimilates toward the L2.

The analysis of interference could be described in the form of Errors both segmental and suprasegmental. It is because the errors could be attributed as a sign to detect the negative transfer uttered by the speaker. Segmental phonology deals with the individual sounds or segments of language, such as vowels and consonants, while suprasegmental deals with features that extend over multiple segments, such as intonation patterns, stress placement, and rhythm in spoken language, also called prosody (Veenendaal et al., 2017). However, in this article, the writer only focuses on the suprasegmental part.

### Suprasegmental errors classification

The error classification of suprasegmental segments may first be categorized based on various types of its distinction. Refer to Goswami, (2020), both segmental and suprasegmental are simply categorized as shown in the figure below.



**Figure 1: Gosmawi 's Segmental and Suprasegmental (2020)**

Based on Gosmawi's concept, it is apparent that suprasegmental includes syllables, intonation, and stress. Thus, the analysis of suprasegmental errors can comprise, stress errors (miss-stressing), intonation errors, and syllable errors. However, in this present research, the writer only focuses on stressing feature, in case, it plays a significant role in spoken-word recognition (Koster & Cutler, 1997; Cooper et al., 2002).

### Miss Stressing

The issue of missing stress in interpreting, as discussed by Williams (1995), can lead to comprehension problems for the listener. The errors of stress placement could change the lexical meaning of a word in a sentence. Based on this, stress is classified into two

fragments; primary is the strongest emphasis placed on a syllable, and secondary is a weaker emphasis of the same word. In English, primary stress is typically placed on the first syllable of a word, while secondary stress is placed on other syllables in the word. However, there are many exceptions to this rule, and the placement of stress can vary depending on the word's origin and pronunciation.

Thus, the author also needs to classify the location of the errors made, enabling the pattern to be described. Considering this, the author adopts the research model of Gunawan (2014), his research on phonological errors. He categorized the errors found into three groups, namely: initial, medial, and final. Initials are errors located in the first syllable, while medials are located in the middle syllable; and lastly, finals are located in the final syllable.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Research Design

The research method employed in this article was a descriptive qualitative approach. Such processes execute through three steps of the coding system introduced by Straus and Corbin (1990), namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This involves in-depth narrative and interpretative analysis of the collected data (Creswell, 2018).

Open coding means the first steps or the initial phase, wherein the data is broken down into discrete parts and labeled descriptively. This process renders the data to be more cone-shaped and specific. Secondly, axial coding involves making connections between the codes. Leading to the identification of categories around which the supporting codes revolve. Finally, selective coding is the process of selecting a core category that connects all the codes from the analysis, ultimately resulting in the development of a unified theory around the research. These steps are crucial to portray how is Madurese interference pattern, especially in the case of suprasegmental.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The analysis initially relied on a video recording of Madurese politician's speech during a conference held at the Ratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). The video stands for 42 minutes and contains approximately 4219 words in total. The researcher transcribed the speech become a text file (TXT) and analyzed the errors one by one. The

errors found such as mis stressing are going to be tagged in NVivo Software to reveal the frequency, correspondence, and concordance of the findings.

After executing such progress, the research gave the same text to the 5 respondents of Madurese students in English Department of Sunan Ampel University. The finding results of the same analysis then merged together into one data to find the trends of the frequent mistakes.

In the data collection, the process includes in three steps. Firstly, the researcher collected data of mis stressing of subjects by focusing on the syllable position of the error. As result, they will be mapped based on the syllable position either in the first, the second, or the third syllable. According to Straus and Corbin's theory, this process is called open coding, making the initially raw data to be more structured. Secondly, the researcher looks for correlations or interrelationships between the data. Grouping the data into initial, medial and final, adapting the data model from Gunawan (2014). This process is what researchers call as axial coding. Finally, the researcher looked at the similarity of the data and the frequency of the most errors so that the conclusion or thesis of the research could emerge. This round is referred to as selective coding.

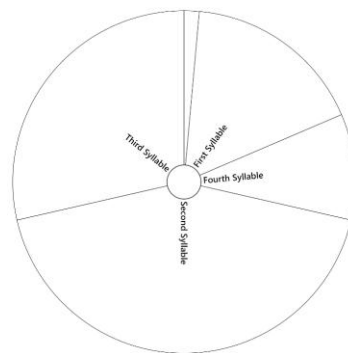
## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Suprasegmental Feature

This study found that the suprasegmental pattern of Madurese stressing mostly places errors at the end of the sentence. The errors are misstressing mistakes paired into initial, medial and final. Then the error mostly lies in the final part. The author believes this finding to be an interference of Madurese which also has stressing in its pronunciation. Madurese in some cases has stressing known as 'sentak' which includes the consonants [b], [d], [j], [g], [h], [dh] and [bh]. As in the words *Tajhin* /ta`tjɪ:n/ (porridge [a type of food]) and *Bighi* /bi:ˈkih/ (seeds), the stress is quite obvious. Although this hypothesis does require further proof, the interference of Madurese subject's English tongue is patterned on misstressing located at the end of the word.

Throughout the analysis, the researchers found that the most syllable placement errors were in the second syllable with 30 findings. As in, when he uttered the word *Seriously*, the emphasis was /sə`ri:əsli/ which is in the second syllable whereas it should

be /`sɪəriəsli/ in the first syllable.<sup>1</sup>. Similar errors are also found as in the word *Constitution*, which is pronounced /kɒns`tɪ:tʃu:ʃn/, when it should be /kɒnstɪ`tʃu:ʃn/ and *Honor* which is pronounced /ə`ne:r/ instead of /`ɑ:ner/. Meanwhile, the second most common error is in the third syllable with 20 findings. For instance, the word *Leadership* is pronounced /lidə`ʃɪ:p/ instead of /`li:dəʃɪp/. The third most common is in the first syllable with 11 findings, for instance, *Arena* is pronounced /`ərinə/ instead of /əri`nə/. The fourth most is in the fourth syllable with 7 findings, and finally the fifth syllable with 1 finding. Syllable misplacement is generally followed by a longer phoneme than the standard tone.



**Figure 2: Circle pictures of miss-stressing placements**

## Syllable Stress Mistakes

### *Initial Errors*

This section only covers incorrect stress placement in the first syllable. Those are words that the stressing is being miss-placed to be in the initial. The researcher found a total of 11 words. The errors were identified by comparing the American English phonemic standard from the Oxford dictionary with Madurese pronunciation in their speech.

There are 11 initial errors found, as illustrated in the table 1 below.

**Table 1**

No.	Word	Subject's Actual Phonetic	Phonetic Standart
1	International	/`ɪntənæʃnəl/	/ɪntə`næʃnəl/
2	Reform	/`rɪ:fɒm/	/rɪ`fɔ:m/
3	Regard	/`rɪ:gəd/	/rɪ`gɑ:d/
4	Presidential	/`prezɪdɛnʃl/	/prezɪ`dɛnʃl/
5	Tremendous	/`trɛməndəs/	/trə`mɛndəs/

<sup>1</sup> The Oxford Dictionary <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english>

6	Arena	/`əri:nə/	/ə`ri:nə/
7	Potentially	/`pə:tenʃəli/	/pə`tenʃəli/
8	Procedurally	/`prəsidʒərəli/	/prə`si:dʒərəli/
9	Transactional	/`trænzækʃənl/	/træn`zækʃənl/
10	Occurrence	/`əkʌrəns/	/ə`kʌrəns/
11	Without	/`wiðəʊt/	/wɪ`ðəʊt/

### Medial Errors

Based on the data found, medial emphasis errors include 3 items; the second syllable, the third syllable, and the fourth syllable.

The second syllable in this case can be divided into two categories; first, the second syllable which is in the middle of the sentence or medial; second, the second syllable which is final because of its position at the end of the word. This letter appears for words that only have two syllables. The same is true for the third and fourth syllables.

There are 25 errors in medials, of which 13 are second syllables; 8 third syllables; and 4 fourth syllables.

**Table 2**

No.	Word	Subject's Actual Phonetic	Phonetic Standard
<b>Second Syllable</b>			
1	Constitution	/kɒns`tɪ:tʃu:ʃn/	/kɒnstɪ`tʃu:ʃn/
2	Institution	/ɪns`tɪ:tʃu:ʃn/	/ɪnstɪ`tʃu:ʃn/
3	Constitutional	/kɒns`tɪ:tʃu:ʃənl/	/kɒnstɪ`tʃu:ʃənl/
4	Citizens	/sɪ`tɪzən/	/`sɪtɪzən/
5	Hedonistic	/he`dəʊnɪstɪk/	/hedə`nɪstɪk/
6	Sovereignty	/sɒv`rənti/	/`sɒvrənti/
7	Democratic	/de`mɒkrætɪk/	/demə`krætɪk/
8	Circumstance	/sɜ:r`kəmstəns/	/`sɜ:rkəmstəns/
9	Constitution	/kɒns`tɪ:tʃu:ʃn/	/kɒnstɪ`tʃu:ʃn/
10	Absolutely	/æb`sə:lu:tli/	/`æbsəlu:tli/
11	Misdirected	/mɪs`daɪrektɪt/	/mɪsdɑɪ`rektɪt/
12	Discrimination	/dɪs`krɪmɪneɪʃn/	/dɪ,skrɪmɪ`neɪʃn/
13	Seriously	/sə`ri:əsli/	/`sɪəriəsli/
<b>Third Syllable</b>			
1	Interpreted	/ɪntɜ`prə:tɪt/	/ɪn`tɜ:prətɪt/
2	Illustrates	/ɪləst`reɪts/	/`ɪləstreɪts/
3	Implementing	/ɪmplɪ`mentɪŋ/	/`ɪmplɪmentɪŋ/
4	Indicated	/ɪndɪ`keɪtɪt/	/`ɪndɪkeɪtɪt/
5	Procedurally	/prəsi`dʒə:rəli/	/prə`si:dʒərəli/
6	Culminating	/kʌlmɪ`neɪtɪŋ/	/`kʌlmɪneɪtɪŋ/
7	Executive	/ɪgzek`jʊtɪv/	/ɪg`zekjʊtɪv/
8	Political	/pəli`tɪkl/	/pə`lɪtɪkl/
<b>Fourth</b>			
1	Apparatuses	/æpəreɪ`təses/	/æpə`reɪtəses/
2	Democratization	/dɪmɒkrə`taɪzeɪʃn/	/dɪ,mɒkrətɑɪ`zeɪʃn/
3	Democratically	/deməkrə`tɪ:kli/	/demə`krætɪkli/
4	Economically	/i:kənə`mɪkli/	/i:kə`nɒmɪkli/

### Final Errors

Final errors are words where the miss-stress is located at the end of the word. In this section, the findings were dominated by the second syllable with a total of 16 emphasis errors, the third syllable with a total of 10, the fourth syllable with a total of 3, and the fifth syllable with a total of 1.

For the second syllable, Maduranese not only gave emphasis but also with a longer tone or could be marked with a colon (:). Not only that, there is one word like *honor* that seems to have the correct emphasis, but because the pronunciation of the second syllable is longer, an indication of error must be given. In other words, the indication of interference is visible.

**Table 3**

No.	Word	Subject's Actual Phonetic	Phonetic Standard
<b>Second Syllable</b>			
1	Forum	/fɔːrə:m/	/'fɔ:rəm/
2	Honor	/aːne:r/	/'ɑ:nər/
3	Person	/pɜːsən/	/'pɜ:rsən/
4	Parties	/pɑːrti:s/	/'pɑ:rtis/
5	Ruler	/ruːlə(r)/	/'ru:lə(r)/
6	Purpose	/pɜːpəs/	/'pɜ:pəs/
7	Widespread	/waɪdˈspreɪd/	/'waɪdspreɪd/
8	Welfare	/welˈfeər/	/'welfeə(r)/
9	Concept	/kɒnˈsept/	/'kɒnsept/
10	Realize	/riəˈlaɪz/	/'ri:əlaɪz/
11	Parties	/pɑːrˈti:s/	/'pɑ:rtis/
12	Market	/mɑːkɪt/	/'mɑ:kɪt/
13	Process	/prəʊˈse:s/	/'prəʊses/
14	Justice	/dʒʌsˈtɪ:s/	/'dʒʌstɪs/
15	Influence	/ɪnˈfluəns/	/'ɪnfluəns/
16	Nuance	/njuːˈɑ:ns/	/'nju:ɑ:ns/
<b>Third Syllable</b>			
1	Established	/ɪstæbˈlɪʃt/	/'ɪstæblɪʃt/
2	Expressly	/ɪkˈspresli/	/'ɪkˈspresli/
3	Liberties	/lɪbərˈti:z/	/'lɪbɜrtɪz/
4	Distinguish	/dɪstɪŋˈwɪʃ/	/'dɪstɪŋgwɪʃ/
5	Nepotism	/nepəˈtɪ:zəm/	/'nepətɪzəm/
6	Leadership	/liːdəˈʃɪ:p/	/'li:dəʃɪp/
7	Ambiguous	/æmbɪɡˈjuəs/	/'æmˈbɪɡjuəs/
8	Politics	/pɒləˈtɪ:ks/	/'pɒlətɪks/
9	Elements	/elɪˈmɛnt/	/'elɪmɛnt/
10	Procedure	/prəsiˈdʒə:r/	/'prə:si:dʒə(r)/
<b>Fourth Syllable</b>			
1	Accompanied	/əkʌmpəˈni:d/	/'əkʌmpənɪd/
2	Legislative	/ledʒɪsləˈtɪ:v/	/'ledʒɪslətɪv/
3	Organizers	/ɔrgənəɪˈzər/	/'ɔ:gənəɪzə(r)/
<b>Fifth Syllable</b>			
1	Representatives	/reprɪzəntəˈtɪ:v/	/'reprɪːzentətɪv/

Looking at the data presented, it can be seen that the dominant mis-stress occurs in the final syllable with 30 errors; then medial errors with 26 errors; and initials with 12 errors. In the final part, the errors are dominated by the second syllable errors. This means that Maduranese speech interference tends to be on the last syllable, in words that only consist of 2 syllables.

## CONCLUSION

Interference in the context of Madurese speech can be seen from suprasegmental features. From the analysis, the researcher found, the most frequent stress errors were located in the second syllable with 30 findings, then the third syllable with 20 findings, the first syllable with 12 findings, the fourth syllable with 7 findings, and the fifth syllable with 1 finding. In short, the errors that occur tend to be in the last syllable, especially for words that only consist of 2 syllables. These effects appear as Madurese interference as the language of their mother tongue. Madurese has a certain stressing known as 'sentak', in which it might be in accordance with the suprasegmental interference. The author believes these findings still require further proofs; however, the clear pattern of miss stressing is evident mostly located at the end of the word.

Lastly, further research is needed, especially in revealing what Madurese dialects and accents look like, as well as the clear correlation effect between this language and the error made. This case study is intended to be an introductory reference so that research with a larger and more measurable sample can be considered for more perfect results.

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