The Acquisition of English Vowels by Javanese and Sundanese Native Speakers

Second language (L2) learners often face difficulties while learning L2 sounds. Evidence suggests that difficulties in learning L2 sounds are affected by the first language (L1). Given the prominent status of English as a foreign language in the multilingual context of Indonesia, it is important to investigate whether Javanese and Sundanese learners of English show systematic problems in learning English. The results could not only serve as a test of L2 speech learning models, but also improve English education in Indonesia. Therefore, speech production and mouse-tracking experiments were carried out to investigate both the L1 vowel systems- and the pattern of L2 acquisition problems among Javanese and Sundanese learners of English.

This book gives an overview of the native vowels of Javanese and Sundanese as well as the perception and production of English vowels by these speakers. The first empirical chapter offers a presentation of the theoretical background and insight into the L1 vowel systems of Javanese and Sundanese speakers. Subsequent data chapters examine perceptual and articulatory difficulties these L2 learners have in the acquisition of English.

The general conclusion is that English vowel perception and production is difficult for Javanese and Sundanese learners of English. The results of the present thesis showed that the L2 speakers do not accurately perceive the *new* L2 vowels /ɑː, ʌ, æː, ɛ, ɪ, ʊ/ and the *similar* L2 vowels /iː, uː/. In terms of pronouncing English vowels, the L2 learners overshorten both long and short English vowels.

This book offers approaches to improve the perception and production of English vowels among the Javanese and Sundanese speakers. We recommend that teachers of English design vowel identification tasks to improve their sound perception of the English vowels. We also suggest that Javanese and Sundanese learners of English should be trained to pronounce vowels /ɑː/, /ɪ/, /æː/, and /iː/ correctly with more openness and a frontal tongue position. The phonetic training should also focus on lengthening short and long English vowels.

This book is of interest to scholars, educators, practitioners and students of EFL.

ISBN 978-94-6093-317-2

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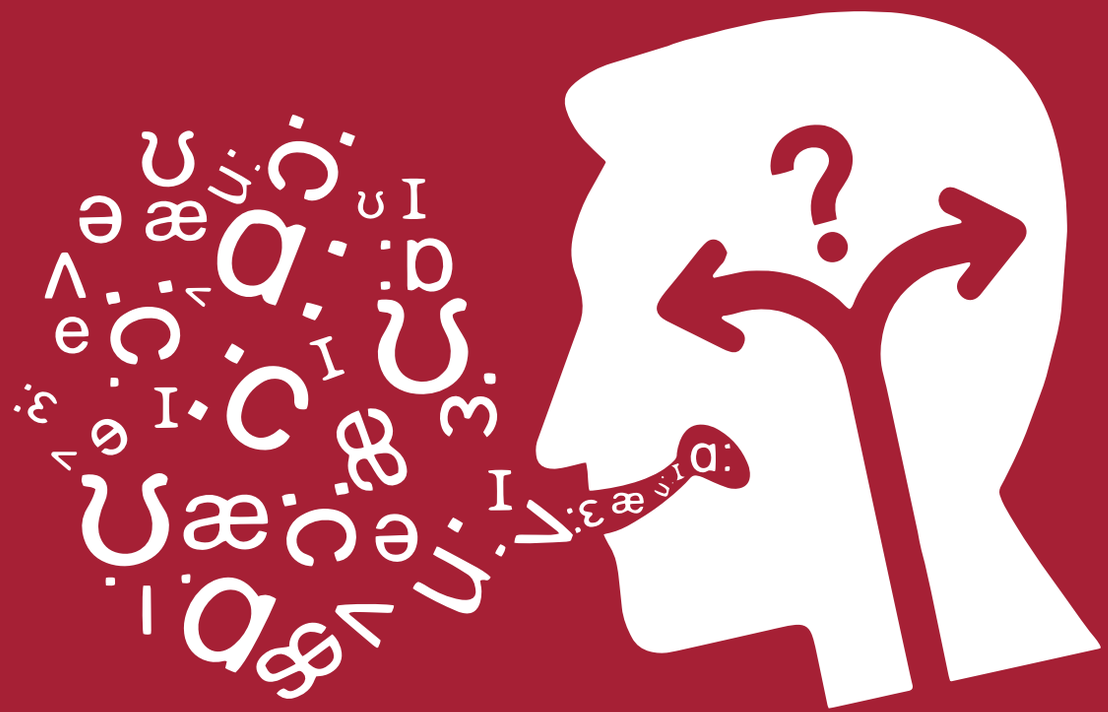

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