



## **Difficulties of Javanese Ethnic Students Pronouncing Mandarin Vocabulary in The Chinese Language and Culture Program at Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta**

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### **Abstract**

The diversity of society in Indonesia produces differences, especially in dialects. Dialect is a variety of languages that arises due to cultural background and the region where dialect speakers live. The Javanese dialect is famous because it has distinctive differences in intonation, language strata, and also varied accents. The pronunciation of the Javanese dialect emphasizes certain letters or what is usually called medok. In this study, the author discusses the difficulties of ethnic Javanese students in the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret in pronouncing Mandarin vocabulary. This research uses a qualitative approach with observation methods and related literature studies. This research aims to provide an overview of the difficulties faced by Javanese ethnic students in pronouncing Mandarin vocabulary. This study found that the Javanese dialect can influence the pronunciation of Mandarin vocabulary spoken by Javanese students. By conducting this research, the author hopes that this research can provide a new perspective for readers, especially Javanese ethnic students studying Mandarin.

**Keywords** : Dialect; Javanese Ethnic; Mandarin Language; Pronouncing; Student

### **Introduction**

Javanese people or Javanese ethnicity are people who live on the island of Java. In cultural anthropology, Javanese people are a handful of people who use the Javanese language with various dialects in their daily lives. Javanese is the mother tongue used by Javanese people in their daily lives. Just like other languages, Javanese also has several different dialects according to its geographical location.

Dialects are language varieties that are related to the region of the speakers. Dialects produce differences in all aspects of language, such as phonology, spelling and pronunciation, morphology and syntax, vocabulary and idioms, and pragmatics. As mentioned earlier, the Javanese language has a variety of dialects according to its geographical location. Based on its geographical location, the island of Java is divided into three regions, namely West Java, Central Java, and East Java. In the three regions of Java, the Javanese dialect is divided into more than three dialects. For example, in the central Java province, there are five dialects, namely Solo-Yogya dialect, Pekalongan dialect, Wonosobo dialect, Banyumas dialect, and Tegal dialect. In addition to having a wide variety of dialects, Javanese people are famous for their 'medok' way of speaking. Quoted from KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa

Indonesia) 'medok' means a thick regional accent. Javanese dialect or accent emphasizes some letters, such as e, as well as a and o. In Javanese, some words are written using the vowel a, but the vowel is read as o.

Mandarin is one of the most influential languages in the world. With a very large number of speakers and China's position as a global economic power, it has succeeded in increasing the interest of Mandarin learners in various parts of the world. In fact, as a response to the high interest and urgency of Mandarin globally, several universities in Indonesia began to open Mandarin department.

In Mandarin there are 22 consonant phonemes (b, p, m, f, d, t, n, l, z, c, s, zh, ch, sh, r, j, q, x, g, k, h, ŋ) and 37 vowels classified into 3 types. Single vowels have only one vowel (a, o, e, i, u, ü, er, ê), double vowels consist of 2 or 3 vowels (ai, ei, ao, ou, ia, ie, iao, iou (iu), ua, uo, uai, uei (ui), üe) and nasal vowels which are vowels ending in "n" or "ng" (an, ian, uan, üan, en, in, uen (un), üen (ün), ang, iang, uang, eng, ing, ueng, ong, iong).

One of the challenges in learning Mandarin is the vast difference in pronunciation compared to Indonesian. This will then become an underlying factor in the difficulty of pronouncing Mandarin. In addition, the influence of regional languages will also produce different Mandarin pronunciations. During the learning process, it is common to find variations in Mandarin pronunciation among students. One of the factors that cause this difference is the regional language of origin of students, such as Javanese speakers. Javanese has its uniqueness in pronunciation, especially in the thick accent better known as 'medok'. This characteristic can affect students' pronunciation in learning Mandarin.

In addition to the vast differences in the pronunciation of Mandarin and Indonesian vocabulary, the challenge faced by Indonesian students is the difference in the Mandarin and Indonesian alphabet. Several consonants in Mandarin do not exist in Indonesian, such as zh, ch, and sh. Of course, this difference is a challenge for Indonesian students to learn the pronunciation of these letters. Researchers can conclude that the challenges and difficulties of Javanese ethnic students in learning Mandarin include differences in the alphabet in Mandarin and Indonesian, differences in pronunciation in Mandarin and Indonesian, and Javanese as a native language that has a thick accent known as 'medok'. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out the influence of the Javanese language on students' difficulties in Mandarin pronunciation for students of Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret.

## **Research Methods**

This research uses a qualitative approach. The methods used include observation, interview, documentation, and literature study. The observation method is a research method that involves direct observation of the phenomenon or object under study to obtain data or information. The interview method is a data collection technique through a question-and-answer process between the researcher and the respondent that takes place in one direction. The data source uses interview results in the form of data and voice recordings using Mandarin by students at the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret. The data source uses literature studies sourced from books and several journals.

### **1. Documentation**

In this study, the authors conducted pronunciation tests with total participation of 20 Javanese students. Pronunciation tests were conducted by asking them to record their voices when reading the Mandarin vowels and consonants. The pronunciation

of the Mandarin vowels and consonants resulted from this recording was then compared with the pronunciation of native Mandarin lecturers of Chinese Language department at Universitas Sebelas Maret to check the correct pronunciation. Thus, the author can understand that there are some difficulties for Javanese student from the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret to pronounce Mandarin vowels and consonants due to their thick Javanese accent.

## 2. Observation

Observations were made during Mandarin speaking and reading courses. The author observed respondents when they were practicing speaking and reading Mandarin texts in the classroom.

## 3. Interview

In this study, the author interviewed 20 ethnic Javanese students from the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret. For the interview to get the desired results, the author prepared 6 questions and 1 sheet of paper containing the Chinese alphabet to be read by the students as research subjects. The questions asked are as follows:

1. How long have you been studying Mandarin?
2. How actively do you use Javanese in your daily life?
3. As a Javanese speaker with a 'Medok' accent, what vowels and/or consonants are difficult for you to pronounce?
4. As a Javanese speaker with a 'Medok' accent, what vocabulary in Mandarin is difficult for you to pronounce?
5. What method have you done in an attempt to minimize the 'Medok' accent in your Mandarin pronunciation?
6. What effect did these methods have on the development of your Mandarin pronunciation?

The Mandarin alphabet sheets given to the research subjects are as follows:

Chinese Pinyin Alphabet							
Pinyin 拼音							
Consonant							
b	p	m	f	d	t	n	l
g	k	h	j	q	x	zh	ch
sh	r	z	c	s	y	w	

Figure 1. Chinese Pinyin Alphabet

From the questions and sheets given in interviewing students as research subjects, several results were obtained which were discussed in more detail in the results and discussion points.

## Results and Discussion

In this study, the author interviewed 20 Javanese ethnic students from the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret. From the observations and interviews conducted, the author obtained several core problems faced by 'medok' Javanese-speaking students in pronouncing Mandarin vocabulary. These problems include the difference in pronunciation of Mandarin and Indonesian vocabulary which is quite far, and differences in the Chinese alphabet, especially vowels and/or consonants that are not in the Indonesian alphabet. The author can analyze the difficulties of Mandarin pronunciation as well as solutions for Javanese speakers with a thick accent or what is known as 'medok'.

### 1. Length of time learning Chinese affects pronunciation quality

Based on the data sources obtained by the researchers, the period of learning Mandarin, was divided into 2 groups:

1. The group with 10-14 years of learning experience, consists of 4 respondents out of 20 respondents.
2. The group with 1-2 years of learning experience, consists of 16 respondents out of 20 respondents.

### 2. Analysis of Javanese speakers' difficulties in pronouncing Mandarin vocabulary

From the results of interviews with respondents, the researchers found out the difficulties and challenges faced by Javanese speakers in pronouncing Mandarin vocabulary. The difficulty for 9 out of 20 respondents is the difference in the pronunciation of vowels and/or consonants in Mandarin and Indonesian. The thick accent certainly makes the pronunciation of vowels and consonants more difficult. The vowels and consonants include:

#### 1. Consonants d, t, b, p, j

A total of 2 out of 20 respondents found it difficult to pronounce the consonants d, t, b, p, and j in Mandarin. This is due to the different pronunciations of the above consonants in Mandarin and Indonesian. Moreover, the Javanese accent emphasizes these consonants when pronounced.

#### 2. Consonants z and c

Based on the data obtained by the researchers, 6 out of 20 respondents found it difficult to pronounce the consonants z and c. This difficulty is due to the pronunciation of the consonants z and c in Mandarin sounding similar. In addition, the pronunciation of consonants z and c in Mandarin and Indonesian has slightly different sounds. Thick accents are also an obstacle because thick accents on a language change the sounds produced by speakers.

#### 3. Consonant r

The difficulty of pronouncing the consonant r based on the data obtained by the researchers, there are 1 respondent out of 20 who find it difficult to pronounce the consonant r. The pronunciation of the consonant r in Mandarin and Indonesian is quite different. The pronunciation of the letter r in Indonesian is stronger and emphasized. Whereas in Mandarin r is pronounced lightly without emphasis and tends to be similar to the pronunciation of l.

Based on the data obtained by the researchers, 7 out of 20 respondents found it difficult to pronounce vowels and/or consonants

in Mandarin that are not found in the Indonesian alphabet. These vowels and consonants include:

1. Consonants zh, sh, and ch

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, 5 out of 20 students found it difficult to pronounce the consonants zh, ch, and sh. This is because in Indonesian there are no letters zh, ch, and sh. In addition to this, the pronunciation of the three consonants sounds similar so students have difficulty distinguishing and pronouncing the three consonants. Moreover, the accent possessed by Javanese speakers makes Javanese ethnic students have to continue practicing their pronunciation.

2. Vowel ü

Based on the data obtained by the researchers, 2 out of 20 students found it difficult to pronounce the vowel ü. This is also because in Indonesian there is no such vowel. In addition, the pronunciation of the vowel ü is not familiar and should be pronounced as the vowel i. Based on the interviews that have been conducted with 20 students.

The researcher found that most of the responders had difficulties in pronouncing vocabulary related to vowels and/or consonants that they found difficult as well, as in the previous discussion. Meanwhile, some of the vocabularies that the researcher managed to glean from the respondents include: 在、早、出租车、日惹、缩略、知、子、什么、商店、and 是四十.

Based on the sources we got, 4 out of 20 respondents did not find it difficult to pronounce the letters and vocabulary in Mandarin even though they were also Javanese speakers. This is due to the time period and their experience in learning Mandarin which has been quite long.

3. Solutions and effectiveness

The data that researchers obtained from respondents regarding solutions related to difficulties in pronouncing vocabulary in Mandarin, namely (1) practicing pronouncing the same vocabulary repeatedly, (2) speaking in Mandarin to closest friends, (3) reading a lot of texts in Mandarin, (4) watching Chinese movies or dramas, (5) listening to songs in Mandarin.

From the data obtained by the researchers, practicing pronouncing vocabulary that is considered difficult repeatedly has the highest level of effectiveness. The practice of pronouncing vocabulary is done regularly by paying attention to the tone and intonation of the word. of course, to get maximum results, the practice must be done consistently, so that it can pronounce the vocabulary correctly and can reduce the 'medok' accent of the speaker.

After practicing pronouncing vocabulary repeatedly, speaking Mandarin to close friends has a fairly high level of effectiveness. Because when mispronouncing a word can be immediately corrected by the interlocutor. In addition to speaking with friends in Mandarin, some respondents revealed practicing speaking in speaking and reading classes so that mistakes can be immediately corrected by the teacher in class.

## Conclusion

From the results of observations and interviews conducted with 20 students of the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret. The conclusion or core of the topic discussed was obtained. A total of 16 students had difficulty in pronouncing vowels and consonants. This is due to the influence of the mother tongue or Javanese language so that Mandarin learners are accustomed to using Javanese accents when speaking Mandarin. The author found out this fact after comparing participants pronunciation of the Chinese alphabet with the pronunciation of native Mandarin speakers, in this context are the lecturers of Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Universitas Sebelas Maret. Furthermore, by analysing their statements in answering some questions related to Javanese accent. From the data, it shows that Chinese and Javanese vocabulary both emphasize intonation on certain letters. So sometimes the letters emphasized in Javanese pronunciation will affect the pronunciation of Mandarin. of course, this can be a difficulty for Javanese-speaking students who are learning Mandarin. But the author recognize, there is no problem without a solution. The solution to make it easier for Javanese-speaking students to learn Mandarin is not only about the length of time to learn Mandarin, but several methods can be used. Such as the practice method, speaking more often, and watching Chinese movies. So that the 'medok' dialect owned by Javanese-speaking students can be reduced.

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