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An Analysis of Pronunciation Errors of English Consonant Sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ by First-Year English Department Students

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Abstract: English pronunciation plays an important role in achieving effective oral communication, yet many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners experience difficulties in producing English sounds that do not exist in their native language. Among these sounds, the English affricative consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are often problematic for Indonesian learners. Therefore, this study aimed to identify and analyze the pronunciation errors, particularly the substitution patterns, of the English affricative consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ produced by first-year English Education students. This research employed descriptive qualitative design supported by simple quantitative analysis. The participants were 17 first-year students selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through a pronunciation test consisting of 20 words containing the target sounds in initial, medial, and final positions, and the students' pronunciations were recorded in video form. The findings revealed a total of 39 pronunciation errors, all of which (100%) were classified as substitution errors. The sound /dʒ/ was more frequently mispronounced than /tʃ/. Pronunciation errors occurred in all sound positions, with the highest frequency found in the initial and medial positions (38.46% each), followed by the final position (23.08%). The dominant substitution patterns were /d/ /j/, /d/ /g/, /tʃ/ → /k/, and /tʃ/ → /s/. These findings indicate that students tended to replace English affricative consonants with more familiar non-affricative sounds. The study highlights the need for targeted pronunciation instruction and systematic drilling activities focusing on English affricative consonants to improve students' pronunciation accuracy and communicative intelligibility.

Keyword: pronunciation errors, affricative consonants, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, EFL learners

INTRODUCTION

English is extensively utilized as a global language for communication in a variety of contexts, such as social contact, business, and education. Pronunciation is crucial for effective

communication when learning English. Correct word pronunciation guarantees that the speaker's intended meaning is understood by the audience (Anjelina & Syam, 2023). Inaccurate pronunciation can lower intelligibility and communication efficiency even in students with sufficient vocabulary and grammatical skills. Recognizing that it immediately affects speaking ability and comprehensibility, pronunciation is thus considered as one of the most crucial aspects of language learning.

Pronunciation consists of both suprasegmental features including stress, rhythm, and intonation as well as segmental features including vowels and consonants (Roach, 2009). English consonant sounds are the specific subject of this research. Speech sounds known as consonants are created when the lips, teeth, tongue, or throat obstruct or restrict airflow from the lungs. Place of articulation, manner of articulation, and voicing are the three main factors used to categorize English consonants. Affricative consonants are thought to be the most challenging of the different kinds of consonants since they combine stop and fricative articulations into a single sound. English affricative consonants are one of the difficult sounds that EFL learners commonly mispronounce (AlMuselhy, 2024). This suggests that learners may experience difficulties in producing English affricative consonants accurately because these sounds require complex articulatory coordination.

Particularly due to a limited exposure to native pronunciation, a lack of confidence when speaking, and interference from their native tongue, Indonesian students frequently struggle to learn English pronunciation. Indonesian learners frequently replace unknown English consonants with sounds from their native tongue (Situmorang et al., 2023). Additionally, Chen and Weijer (2022) explain that L2 segment learning outcomes are impacted by variations in the sound systems of the first and target languages. Learners frequently experience first language interference when they incorporate their native language's phonemes into the target language. Because some English consonant sounds are absent from the phonological systems of their native language, learners may pronounce words incorrectly.

Students pronunciation of English is impacted by mother tongue interference since learners often carry over their first language's sound patterns into the target language (Listyani et al., 2024). Learners may mispronounce unusual English consonants and make pronunciation mistakes when speaking due to this problem. According to Wang and Bundgaard-Nielsen (2026) Mandarin learners have significant trouble differentiating English affricates. Indonesian EFL learners also struggle with pronunciation, particularly when it comes to pronouncing the English affricative consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, learners may replace /dʒ/ with /j/ or pronounce /tʃ/ as /s/ or /t/.

Previous studies have discussed pronunciation errors among EFL learners. Khairunnisa et al., (2023) analyzed college students' pronunciation errors using minimal pairs and found that students still experienced difficulties distinguishing several English consonant sounds, including /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. Another study conducted by A'yuni and Volya (2024) discussed students' ability in pronouncing affricative consonants in general. The result showed that many students still experienced difficulties in pronouncing English affricative consonants correctly, especially the /dʒ/ sound. Furthermore, Zalha and Lefiandi (2024) found that Acehnese EFL learners experienced difficulties pronouncing several English consonant sounds due to mother tongue interference and lack of pronunciation practice.

However, previous studies generally analyzed pronunciation errors broadly, while studies specifically focusing on English affricative consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ among first-year English Department students are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the pronunciation errors of the English consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ produced by first-year English Department students, identify the positions in which the errors occur most frequently, and describe the common substitution patterns produced by the students.

Literature Review

Pronunciation

The creation of sounds used to convey meaning is known as pronunciation (Utami, 2023). Although it affects how clearly speakers convey their messages in communication, pronunciation is a crucial component of learning English. During interactions, clear pronunciation helps minimize misunderstandings and make the intended message easier for listeners to understand. In order to effectively communicate when learning English as a foreign language, students must not only comprehend grammar and vocabulary but also pronounce English words correctly.

Pronunciation include suprasegmental elements like stress, rhythm, and intonation as well as segmental elements like vowels and consonants (Roach, 2009). In line with recent study that state the production of language sounds and the usage of suprasegmental elements to convey meaning and emotion are both aspects of pronunciation (Johan & Cahyani, 2024). Phonetics and phonology are closely related to pronunciation since they both examine speech sounds and how they are used in communication. EFL learners may make pronunciation mistakes in both segmental and suprasegmental parts of speech production.

English Consonant

Consonants are spoken sounds that are made when the speech organs obstruct or restrict lung airflow. Consonants are created by blocking airflow in various vocal tract regions (Roach, 2009). English consonants are categorized according to voicing, articulation manner, and place of articulation. Whereas method of articulation specifies how the airflow is created during speaking, place of articulation refers to the area of the speech organs where the airflow is blocked. Whether or not the vocal cords vibrate when making consonants is referred to as voicing.

Consonants are crucial for learning English pronunciation since variations in their sounds can affect communication's meaning and comprehensibility. However, some English consonants are seen to be challenging for EFL learners because they require for unusual articulatory movements and sound differences that might not be present in the learners' native tongue. The process of consonant acquisition in English describes how people, especially language learners, pick up and improve the capacity to generate and perceive English consonant sounds (Wiranda et al., 2023). EFL learners may have trouble pronouncing words correctly due to differences between the English consonant system and their native tongue. Affricative consonants are one of the more challenging varieties of English consonants because they combine stop and fricative articulations into one sound.

Affricative Consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/

Affricative consonants include the sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. A voiceless post-alveolar affricate is /tʃ/ as in chair, and a voiced counterpart is /dʒ/ as in judge. Although both noises are produced in the palate alveolar location, namely between the hard palate and the alveolar ridge, their voicing is different. Affricatives are crucial in English pronunciation since they are commonly used in everyday speech and, if mispronounced, can affect intelligibility (Roach, 2009).

Affricate is a sequence of a stop followed by a fricative that functions as a single sound (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2015). This combination makes affricative consonants more difficult to pronounce because speakers must produce two articulatory movements in one sound. As a result, English learners may experience difficulties pronouncing /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ accurately, especially when similar sounds do not exist in their first language.

The affricative consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ may occur in different positions in English words, namely initial, medial, and final positions. The position of the sounds may influence learners' pronunciation accuracy. In addition, English affricative consonants are represented

by different spelling patterns such as “ch,” “tch,” “j,” “g,” and “dge,” which may confuse EFL learners when pronouncing English words. Therefore, learners may produce pronunciation errors such as sound substitution when pronouncing English affricative consonants.

Pronunciation Errors

Pronunciation errors commonly occur when learners produce English sounds that are unfamiliar in their native language. The majority of pronunciation problems are brought on by challenges in accurately articulating unexpected English sounds, which frequently arise from a lack of exposure to phonetic elements of the target language and a lack of expertise differentiating related sounds (Manurung et al., 2024). In addition, differences between the learners’ first language and English phonological systems may further influence the production of English consonant sounds, as learners tend to transfer the sound patterns of their mother tongue into English pronunciation.

This phenomenon is closely related to language interference. The term language interference describes how a learner's native tongue affects their ability to recognize and produce the language they are learning (Lina, 2023). This influence can affect both perception and production, leading learners to apply native language rules when processing English sounds, which may result in systematic pronunciation deviations, especially in consonant articulation.

Pronunciation errors may occur in several forms, such as substitution, omission, insertion, and distortion. Substitution occurs when learners replace a target sound with another sound, omission occurs when a sound is deleted, insertion occurs when additional sounds are added, and distortion occurs when sounds are produced inaccurately. Among those types, substitution errors are commonly found among EFL learners because learners often replace unfamiliar English sounds with sounds that are more familiar in their native language.

Error Analysis

Error analysis is crucial because it enables educators and researchers to pinpoint students' challenges and enhance the quality of instruction (Agustinasari et al., 2022). Errors are seen as a normal aspect of language acquisition and offer important insights into the language development of learners (Lamçja & Vora, 2024). Error analysis also helps researchers identify, classify, and explain learners’ errors systematically in order to understand learners’ language difficulties. In pronunciation learning, learners may produce phonological errors because they tend to transfer the sound patterns of their first language into the target language. Therefore, error analysis is useful for identifying pronunciation problems experienced by EFL learners, especially in pronouncing English affricative consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method with simple quantitative analysis. The study was conducted on May 31, 2026, at the English Education Department of Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo during the academic year 2026/2027. The participants of the research were 17 first-year students selected using purposive sampling because they had similar educational backgrounds and were still in the early stage of learning English pronunciation.

The instrument used in this research was a pronunciation test in the form of a word list containing 20 English words with the target affricative consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ in initial, medial, and final positions. Examples of words representing the initial position were *choice* /tʃɔɪs/ and *giant* /dʒaɪənt/. The medial position was represented by words such as

nature /neɪtʃər/ and *dangerous* /deɪndʒərəs/, while the final position was represented by words such as *rich* /rɪtʃ/ and *age* /eɪdʒ/. The participants were asked to record a video while pronouncing the given words individually, and the recordings were collected as the primary data of the research.

The data collected was analyzed through several steps. First, the researcher listened carefully to the participants' pronunciation recordings and transcribed the students' pronunciations of the target words. Second, the researcher identified and analyzed pronunciation errors related to the target consonant sounds. This study focused specifically on the pronunciation accuracy of the English consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. Other pronunciation aspects such as vowels, stress, intonation, and overall accent were not included in the analysis unless they directly affected the production of the target consonant sounds.

The identified errors were then classified according to the error taxonomy proposed in pronunciation studies, including substitution, omission, distortion, and insertion errors. However, all pronunciation errors found in this study were categorized as substitution errors. After that, the errors were categorized based on the position of the target sounds, namely initial, medial, and final positions. The researcher also analyzed the frequency of errors produced in each target consonant sound and identified the common substitution patterns produced by the students. Furthermore, representative examples of pronunciation errors were selected to describe the students' error patterns more clearly. Finally, the frequency and percentage of the errors were calculated and presented in tables to determine the most common pronunciation error patterns produced by the students. The percentage of errors was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\ \%$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis showed that the students produced pronunciation errors in pronouncing the English consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. Based on the findings, all pronunciation errors found in this research were classified as substitution errors. A total of 39 substitution errors were identified from the pronunciation test conducted with 17 first-year English Department students. Among the 17 participants, 15 students produced pronunciation errors, while 2 students produced accurate pronunciation of all target words.

Table 1. Frequency of Pronunciation Errors

Error Type	Frequency	Percentage
Substitution	39	100%
Omission	0	0%
Distortion	0	0%
Insertion	0	0%
Total	**39**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that the findings indicate that substitution errors were the dominant pronunciation errors produced by the students. The findings indicate that the students tended to replace unfamiliar English affricative consonant sounds with consonant sounds that were more familiar in their first language phonological system. Meanwhile, two students were able to pronounce all target words accurately without producing pronunciation errors.

Table 2. Frequency of Errors Based on Sound Position

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Initial Position	15	38.46%
Medial Position	15	38.46%

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Final Position	9	23.08%
Total	**39**	**100%**

Based on Table 2, pronunciation errors occurred in all sound positions. Initial and medial position errors were equally frequent, with 15 errors (38.46%), while final position errors occurred less frequently, with 9 errors (23.08%). The findings indicate that students experienced similar difficulties in pronouncing affricative consonants in both initial and medial positions. This may be because the target sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ require learners to produce a combination of a stop and a fricative articulation, which can be challenging regardless of whether the sounds occur at the beginning or in the middle of a word. In medial positions, students may also experience additional difficulty because the affricative sounds are produced between surrounding vowels or consonants, requiring smooth transitions between sounds. As a result, the level of difficulty in initial and medial positions appears to be relatively similar. In contrast, fewer errors were found in the final position, suggesting that students were generally more successful in producing the target affricative consonants at the end of words. This may be because final-position words in the pronunciation test were more familiar to the students or because the target sounds were more clearly perceived when they occurred at the end of a word.

Table 3. Frequency of Errors Based on Target Sounds

Target Sound	Frequency	Percentage
/tʃ/	16	41%
/dʒ/	23	59%
Total	**39**	**100%**

Table 3 shows that the consonant sound /dʒ/ produced more pronunciation errors than /tʃ/. This finding indicates that students experienced greater difficulty pronouncing the voiced affricative consonant sound accurately. One possible reason is that the sound /dʒ/ rarely occurs in Indonesian pronunciation patterns compared to simpler consonant sounds such as /j/ and /g/. As a result, students tended to pronounce English words containing /dʒ/ based on spelling patterns or native language influence.

Table 4. Common Substitution Patterns

Substitution Pattern	Frequency
/tʃ/ → /k/	7
/tʃ/ → /s/	6
/tʃ/ → /t/	3
/dʒ/ → /g/	9
/dʒ/ → /j/	11
/dʒ/ → /t/	1
/dʒ/ → /z/	1
/dʒ/ → /tʃ/	1
Total	**39**

Table 4 shows several substitution patterns produced by the students when pronouncing the English affricative consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. The most frequent substitution pattern was /dʒ/ → /j/, which occurred 11 times, followed by /dʒ/ → /g/ with 9 occurrences and /tʃ/ → /k/ with 7 occurrences.

The findings indicate that students tended to replace English affricative consonants with simpler consonant sounds that are more familiar in Indonesian pronunciation patterns.

The sound /dʒ/ was commonly substituted with /j/ because both sounds share similar articulatory characteristics and are perceived as closely related by Indonesian learners.

In addition, several students substituted /dʒ/ with /g/, particularly in words such as "giant" and "digital." This substitution may be influenced by English spelling patterns because the letter "g" is frequently associated with the /g/ sound in Indonesian pronunciation. The substitution of /tʃ/ with /k/ also appeared frequently, especially in words beginning with "ch," such as "church" and "choke." This finding suggests that students relied on orthographic forms when pronouncing unfamiliar English words. Some students also replaced /tʃ/ with /s/, indicating difficulty in producing affricative articulation. Instead of combining stop and fricative articulations, students simplified the sound into a single fricative consonant. Less frequent substitution patterns such as /tʃ/ → /t/, /dʒ/ → /t/, and /dʒ/ → /z/ were also identified, although they occurred only in a small number of cases.

Table 5. Representative Examples of Pronunciation Errors

Student	Word	Standard Pronunciation	Student Pronunciation	Position	Error Type
S3	Church	/tʃɜːrtʃ/	/krʊtʃ/	Initial	Substitution
S4	Age	/eɪdʒ/	/eɪg/	Final	Substitution
S12	Nature	/neɪtʃər/	/natur/	Medial	Substitution
S13	Choice	/tʃɔɪs/	/sɔɪs/	Initial	Substitution
S16	Giant	/dʒaɪənt/	/gian/	Initial	Substitution
S17	Dangerous	/deɪndʒərəs/	/denjəs/	Medial	Substitution

Table 5 presents representative examples of pronunciation errors produced by the students. The examples show that the students often replaced the target consonant sounds with simpler consonants. For example, the word "church" was pronounced as /krʊtʃ/, indicating the substitution of /tʃ/ with /k/. Similarly, the word "giant" was pronounced as /gian/, showing the substitution of /dʒ/ with /g/.

Discussion

The dominance of substitution errors indicates that the students tended to replace unfamiliar English affricative consonant sounds with sounds that were more familiar in their native language. This finding is consistent with previous studies on English pronunciation errors among EFL learners. AlMuselhy (2024) found that the English affricative consonant /ʧ/ was among the difficult sounds for EFL learners to pronounce accurately. The study also revealed that pronunciation errors occurred more frequently in the initial position than in medial or final positions. Similarly, this study found that students experienced difficulties pronouncing the English affricative consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, especially in initial and medial positions. The findings also showed that the consonant sound /dʒ/ produced more errors than /tʃ/. This may occur because /dʒ/ is less familiar to Indonesian learners and requires more complex articulation involving both voiced stop and fricative movements. In addition, the sound /dʒ/ is represented by various spelling forms such as "j," "g," and "dge," which may confuse learners and influence their pronunciation accuracy. Another possible factor is the influence of Indonesian pronunciation habits and regional dialects. In Indonesian, the letter "j" is commonly pronounced with a stronger or thicker sound, and this pronunciation habit may influence learners when producing the English sound /dʒ/. As a result, students tended to pronounce /dʒ/ using sounds that were closer to Indonesian pronunciation patterns rather than the standard English pronunciation.

Mother tongue interference is considered one of the factors influencing students' pronunciation errors. According to Noviyenty and Putri (2021), language errors result from interference, which happens when learners assimilate aspects of their mother tongue into their target language. Similarly, Irene et al., (2023) state that when someone is bilingual, mother

tongue interference occurs, which might be problematic. Indonesian learners are generally unfamiliar with English affricative consonants because the articulation and phonological functions of these sounds differ from those in Indonesian. As a result, students tended to substitute the target sounds with sounds that were easier or more familiar for them to pronounce.

In addition, spelling interference also influenced the students' pronunciation. Several students pronounced English words based on their orthographic forms rather than their phonetic pronunciations. For example, words containing the spelling "ch" were frequently pronounced using /k/, while words containing "g" or "j" were pronounced using /g/ or /j/. This phenomenon indicates that students relied heavily on spelling patterns when pronouncing unfamiliar English words. Therefore, pronunciation practice focusing on English affricative consonants is necessary to help students improve their pronunciation accuracy and speaking intelligibility.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that first-year English Department students experienced difficulties in pronouncing the English affricative consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. A total of 39 pronunciation errors were identified, and all of them were classified as substitution errors. This finding indicates that the students tended to replace the target affricative consonants with other consonant sounds rather than omitting, inserting, or distorting the sounds.

The findings also showed that pronunciation errors occurred in all sound positions, namely initial, medial, and final positions. Initial and medial positions produced the highest number of errors, with 15 errors each (38.46%), while the final position produced 9 errors (23.08%). These results suggest that students encountered similar levels of difficulty when producing English affricative consonants at the beginning and in the middle of words.

In terms of error patterns, several dominant substitutions were identified. The sound /dʒ/ was most frequently replaced by /j/ and /g/, whereas /tʃ/ was commonly substituted with /k/ and /s/. These recurring patterns indicate that students consistently replaced English affricative consonants with non-affricative sounds that share certain articulatory features with the target sounds. Therefore, the main pronunciation difficulty was not the complete absence of sound production but the inaccurate realization of the affricative consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/.

The findings of this study provide practical implications for the teaching of English Phonetics and Phonology. Lecturers are encouraged to design pronunciation activities that specifically focus on the articulation of English affricative consonants. Drilling activities should include minimal-pair exercises, repetition drills, and word-position practice involving /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ in initial, medial, and final positions. Particular attention should be given to contrasting the target sounds with the common substitution sounds identified in this study, such as /tʃ/ versus /k/ and /s/, and /dʒ/ versus /j/ and /g/. In addition, the use of audio models, phonetic transcription exercises, and guided pronunciation practice may help students develop greater awareness of the articulatory characteristics of English affricative consonants and improve their pronunciation accuracy.

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