

ABSTRACT

Evaluation of speech perception is one of the highly focused research areas in the field of phonetics and phonology. However, there is limited research on the perception of the language produced by the Arabic-speakers of English. Since Arabic is the dominant language, it can be assumed that there is an L1 interference in the English produced by the Arabic speakers. Moreover, with the internationalization of education, there has been an increase in the number of foreign students pursuing their higher education in Malaysia. This provides the rationale for conducting a study on the intelligibility of the English spoken by the Arab speakers of English.

This study started from three experiments designed to test whether Malay speakers of English can perceive the selected English vowels produced by an Arabic speaker of English from Oman. The findings suggest that the Arabic-accented English evaluated are generally intelligible to Malay speakers of English. It can be seen that Arabic speaker's productions of English vowel monophthongs that have Arabic analogs were not necessarily more intelligible than those that lack Arabic counterparts. Though an interference of the L1 vowel system was found, this study does agree with the statement of Flege and Port (1981, p. 133), that "phonetic differences between L1 and L2 will lead to non-L2 phonetic characteristics in the L2 produced by the learners of the L2 language". Although the findings presented in this Research Report are preliminary in nature, they contribute to the growing body of research on the perception and production of vowels in different varieties of English.

ABSTRAK

Penilaian persepsi pertuturan merupakan salah satu bidang kajian yang menjadi tumpuan di bidang fonetik dan fonologi. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian berkaitan penutur bahasa Inggeris di kalangan bangsa Arab adalah terhad. Ini adalah kerana bahasa Arab adalah bahasa dominan, ia diandaikan bahawa terdapatnya campur tangan L1 di dalam bahasa Inggeris yang dimanipulasi oleh penutur bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa kedua. Tambahan lagi, dengan percepatan pengantarabangsaan budaya lain, puluhan pelajar asing yang melanjutkan pelajaran di Malaysia dan di antara mereka adalah berbangsa Arab. Oleh yang demikian, meningkatlah keperluan untuk mengkaji kejelasan bahasa Inggeris yang menggunakan loghat bahasa Arab.

Kajian ini bermula dari dua eksperimen penentuan dan satu eksperimen diskriminasi yang direka untuk menguji persepsi penutur bahasa Inggeris di kalangan bangsa Melayu terhadap sebelas monoftong bahasa Inggeris yang dituturkan oleh seorang penutur Inggeris berbangsa Arab yang berasal daripada salah satu Negara Semenanjung Arab, Oman. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa bahasa Inggeris yang menggunakan loghat Arab yang dikaji adalah secara umumnya difahami oleh penutur bahasa Inggeris berbangsa Melayu. Hal ini dapat dilihat dalam penghasilan vokal monoftong yang mempunyai analog bahasa Arab oleh penutur berbangsa Arab tidak semestinya difahami berbanding mereka yang tidak mempunyai ramai rakan di kalangan bangsa Arab. Walaupun campur tangan sistem vokal oleh L1 ditemui, kajian ini bersetuju dengan kenyataan oleh Flege dan Port (1981, p. 133), yang “perbezaan fonetik di antara L1 dan

L2 akan menyebabkan kepada sifat fonetik non-L2 yang dihasilkan oleh para pelajar bahasa L2”. Walaupun penemuan di dalam Laporan Kajian ini adalah penemuan awal, namun penemuan ini menyumbang kepada perkembangan penyelidikan tentang persepsi dan penghasilan vokal di dalam kepelbagaian bahasa Inggeris

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