

The Impact of Thai Phonological Interference on The Aesthetics of Indonesian Poetry Reading: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the forms and impacts of phonological interference in the reading of Indonesian poetry by non-native speakers, especially students from Thailand. Phonological interference is a linguistic phenomenon when the sound system of the first language (L1) influences the pronunciation of the second language (L2), which in this context is Indonesian. Using a qualitative case study approach, this study analyzed recordings of the reading of a poem entitled "Guru adalah Lampu" and semi-structured interviews with research subjects. The results of the analysis showed a consistent pattern in the form of phonological interference, such as changes in the consonant, difficulty in pronouncing diphthongs, and the addition of vowels at the end of consonant words. This phenomenon affects the aesthetic aspects of poetry, such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance, and has an impact on the clarity of meaning and emotional experience of poetry. However, on the other hand, interference can also provide local nuances and open up the possibility of exploring new aesthetics in the art of language. This study is expected to enrich the understanding of the impact of interlanguage phonology in the context of literature and become the basis for more inclusive and effective language learning strategies and poetry appreciation for non-native speakers.

Keywords: Foreign Speakers, Indonesian Poetry, Language Aesthetics, ,
Language Learning, Phonological Interference.

INTRODUCTION

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Speaking is a form of action that has an important role to convey messages (Harianto, 2020). Speaking well and correctly will produce the expected message and in accordance with the messenger (Purba & Sitorus, 2023). Speaking skills are a skill used to communicate orally (Sap & No, 2017). The skill of conveying information in communication is often accompanied by expression. Speaking skills have an important role because through good speaking it will facilitate the delivery of messages to others. Poor speaking skills will interfere with the continuity of the communication process between the messenger and the recipient of the message (Gustika et al., 2021)

Language as a tool to convey opinions and interactions in communication in the social environment (Ratna Juwita et al., 2023). Language is a fundamental communication tool in human life (Nukman et al., 2024), reflecting the culture, identity, and way of thinking of a society (Oktaviasary, 2024). In Indonesia, Indonesian serves as the national language (Hura & Dirgantara, 2024) that connects various ethnicities and cultures (Antari Swandewi, 2019). However, in a multilingual context, the phenomenon of language interference often occurs, where elements from the mother tongue (B1) influence the use of the second language (B2) (Putra, 2017) (Firmansyah, 2021), in this case Indonesian. Phonological interference, which relates to the sound system (Hura & Dirgantara, 2024), is one aspect that is interesting to study because it can affect the clarity and beauty of pronunciation, especially in the context of poetry which relies heavily on rhythm and sound (Basri, 2020).

One of the speaking skills is by reciting a poem. Poetry is a form of literary work from the results of the expression and feelings of the poet with language bound by rhythm, mantra, rhyme, lyrical arrangement and stanza and full of meaning (Astuti & Humaira, 2022). Poems are creative expressions of the poet's innermost thoughts and feelings that are structured to concentrate the linguistic power of words (Journal & Language, 2024). Poetry prioritizes sound, form, aesthetics and also the meaning conveyed which is meaning as evidence of good poetry if there is a deep meaning by compressing all elements of language.

Phonology, as a branch of linguistics that studies the sound system of a language (Umam & Tata, 2024), plays an important role in word formation and meaning. Phonological interference occurs when the sound system of the mother tongue (B1) affects the pronunciation or articulation of the second language (B2) (Wijaya, 2024), in this case Indonesian. Speakers who do not fully master the Indonesian phonological system tend to use from their B1, resulting in differences in pronunciation that can affect the clarity and beauty of the language (Sasabila et al., 2023).

Indonesian poetry, as a form of literature, relies heavily on the beauty of sound and rhythm (Basri, 2020). Proper articulation is essential in conveying the meaning and emotions contained in poetry. Phonological interference can be an obstacle in the appreciation and understanding of poetry, as it can alter or adhere to sounds that should be pronounced clearly

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(Basri, 2020). These changes due to interference can interfere with the aesthetic experience of the reader or listener of the poem.

Two important elements, namely emotional involvement and acoustic impression, need attention in linguistic studies (Thomas, 2022). So far, both of these are often overlooked in linguistic studies. Therefore, explaining these two factors is important to understand the relationship between language sounds and their aesthetic effects and meanings. It must be recognized that the aesthetic value and meaning contained in language sounds are closely related to emotions and acoustic perception in an utterance (Ardiansanto, 2023).

A more interesting approach is when language sounds are studied based on their influence on aesthetic effects and meaning. Initially, it can be assumed that the use of vowel and consonant phonemes in oral communication has the potential to create an aesthetic impression and carry certain meanings. In further elaboration, the use of certain phonemes in speech can provide its own beauty and meaning effects (Giri, 2025). The aesthetics in question is the emergence of nuances of beauty felt by the listener when the sound is spoken, where the listener captures the beauty of the acoustic effects of the sound. Meanwhile, the meaning in question does not only include segmental aspects, but also reflects the flavor value of the sound.

Slamet Muljana added that the sense value is related to a person's emotional condition, such as feelings of joy, sadness, emotion, or anxiety. This assumption is even stronger when certain phonemes in speech practice are associated with the resulting imagination (Al-Mubarrok et al., 2021). This imagination can be connected to the five senses, so that sound-based imaginative constructions are also in contact with sensory beauty. Pradopo, for example, categorizes the types of imagination based on the senses, which reflect the meaning of taste, namely the meaning that shows the speaker's attitude, emotion, motivation, and interest in the experience.

In relation to language, reading poetry and appropriate phonemes will be easier to unite and provide conveyed meaning, and the aesthetics of poetry can be felt if those who read it are speakers of the language itself. It is different if the reader of the poem is a foreign speaker. This is due to phonological interference.

Phonological interference occurs when second language speakers bring the sound patterns of the first language into the pronunciation of the second language. This can lead to sound changes such as deletion, addition, or replacement of phonemes that do not fit the target language's phonological system (Al Faris et al., 2024). For example, speakers of a foreign language who do not have a particular phoneme in their native language may replace it with the most similar phoneme, thus changing the original sound of the word in the poem.

In the context of poetry, this phoneme change has the potential to

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damage the sound pattern that has been designed by the poet (Supratmi & Zaidin, 2025), thus reducing the beauty and harmony of the poem's sound. The results of research related to Thai phonological interference in the articulation of Indonesian poetry show a consistent pattern of consonant sound placement /r/ to /l/. This phenomenon can be explained through the Markedness Differential Hypothesis theory, which states that phonological features that are more complex or “marked” in the second language will be more difficult to master if they do not exist in the first language (Yani et al., 2023). The alveolar trill consonant /r/ is not common in Thai and is classified as a “marked” sound, therefore Thai speakers tend to replace it with the more familiar lateral consonant /l/ in their phonological system. Eckman expands on his theory by adding that this level of difficulty is further increased in articulation contexts that require high precision such as reading poetry, where sounds have a crucial aesthetic function.

Much research has been done on phonological interference in foreign language learning contexts, including in Indonesian language learning for non-native speakers (Jasa et al., 2025). However, studies that specifically discuss the impact of phonological interference on the articulation of Indonesian poetry by foreign learners are still relatively limited. In fact, the reality shows that many foreign speakers with a mother tongue background that is very different from Indonesian have difficulties in articulating poetry with appropriate pronunciation, both in terms of sound clarity and prosodic aspects such as intonation and stress. (Caffrey et al., 2022). This phenomenon raises critical questions about the extent to which phonological interference from foreign learners' first language can affect the quality of Indonesian poetry pronunciation and performance. (Anjani et al., 2020). As in the case of Thai students who study Indonesian and then read Indonesian poetry, the phonological interference greatly affects the aesthetics of the Indonesian poetry.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the impact of phonological interference on the aesthetics of Indonesian poetry. Although many studies have been conducted on phonological interference in the context of language learning, few have examined its impact on language arts such as poetry. Previous studies have focused more on aspects of learning and everyday use without considering how this interference can change the aesthetic experience of enjoying poetry. Therefore, the research was conducted to provide results on the effect of phonological interference on the aesthetics of reading Indonesian poetry against a Thai background.

The literature survey shows that phonological interference can appear in various forms, such as the omission, addition, or change of phoneme sounds (Umam & Tata, 2024). Some studies have also shown that this interference can affect the understanding and pronunciation of words in Indonesian (Hura & Dirgantara, 2024). However, while there are many studies on interference in the context of everyday communication, there has been no in-depth study exploring its impact on Indonesian poetry specifically.

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The gaps in this study include a lack of understanding of how phonological interference occurs in Thai speakers towards the aesthetics of Indonesian poetry. This is important to study because poetry is not just words; it is an artistic expression that utters the right pronunciation to convey meaning and emotion (Rindfuss et al., 2023). Therefore, this study seeks to answer the question of the most common forms of phonological interference in the articulation of poetry by speakers with a regional language background.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the impact of phonological interference on the articulation of Indonesian poetry. The research will identify the patterns of interference that emerge as well as analyze how it affects important elements in poetry such as rhyme and rhythm. By using a qualitative type of data and acoustic phonetic analysis, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide new insights into the relationship between phonological interference and the art of language.

The hope is that this study will help shed light on the nuances of phonological interference as they persist in poetry from Indonesia. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to be the basis for the development of more effective language learning strategies to improve poetry phonology skills among speakers with regional language backgrounds. Therefore, this research not only contributes to the field of linguistics but also to the preservation and development of literary arts in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. Qualitative research was chosen because it aims to understand and explore the phenomenon of phonological interference in depth in a natural context and as it is (Heriyanto, 2018). Case study as an approach allows the researcher to conduct an intensive exploration of one particular object or event, in this case the recitation of a poem titled “[The Teacher is a Lamp](#)” by Thai students. The focus on a single case allows for a thorough analysis of the phonological phenomena that emerge, including how the students' first language (L1) background affects pronunciation in the next language (foreign language). In this study, the research subject was a student from Rungtarun Islam Wittaya School.

The data used in this study is primary data, which is data obtained directly from the object of research (Friedland, 2021). Data collection was done through the main methods, namely [video](#) of poetry readings by Thai students who are BIPA learners, as well as semi-structured interviews aimed at exploring their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in the Indonesian language learning process. Recordings were used to analyze the phonological elements in students' pronunciation, while interviews were used to extract information related to students' language background, their experience in learning Indonesian, and phonetic difficulties encountered when reading poetry. In general, the more learning experiences students have, the tendency

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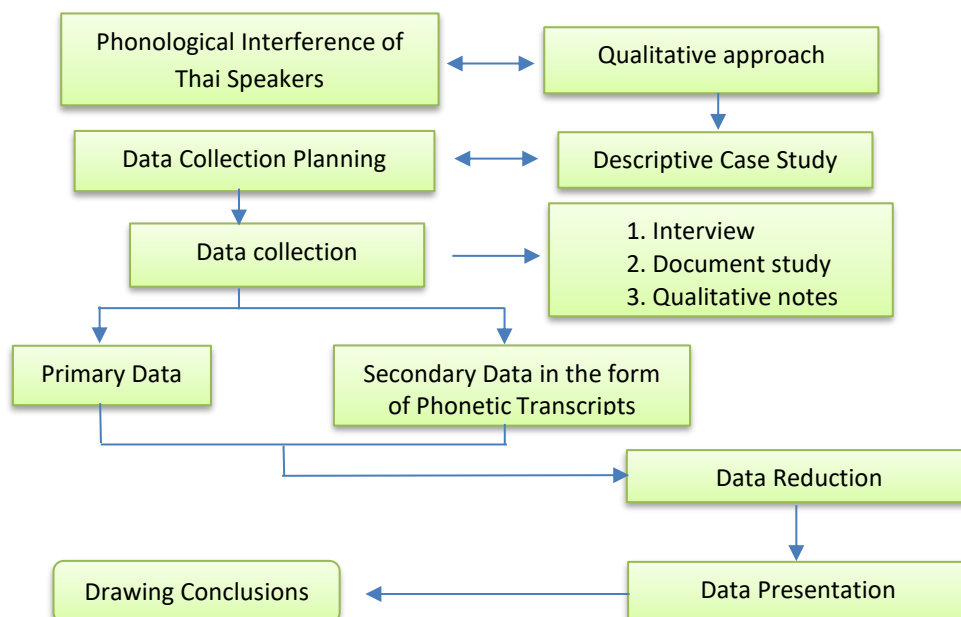
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for them to make pronunciation errors tends to decrease. In contrast, students with limited learning experience showed more phonetic errors, especially in the pronunciation of sounds that were not present in their mother tongue. With this combination of data, the researcher can obtain a comprehensive picture of the forms and sources of phonological interference that occur.

The data analysis technique in this research is qualitative descriptive analysis combined with phonetic transcription. Descriptive analysis is used to describe and interpret the findings systematically and in depth. The analysis procedure in this study includes stages that focus on phonological aspects and literary aesthetics in poetry recitation by BIPA learners. The first stage is sound analysis which includes observing phonological elements such as vowel and consonant articulation, intonation, word stress, rhythm, and pauses used in the reading. The next stage is the aesthetic analysis, which aims to assess how the sound elements contribute to the beauty, expression of emotion, and soulfulness of the poem. Next, the relationship between sound and meaning is analyzed, to see how pronunciation and prosody affect the interpretation of the poem's content and convey the aesthetic nuances contained therein. Finally, a contextual interpretation is conducted by considering students' linguistic background and learning experiences, to understand the relationship between phonological competence and the ability to appreciate and convey aesthetic values in Indonesian poetry. With this method, it is expected that the research results can contribute to the understanding of the impact of language background on the acquisition of phonology in learning Indonesian by foreign speakers.

Diagram 1:

Diagram that shows the research process carried out by the researcher



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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Phonological Interference and Sound Change

Phonological interference is an event in which speakers insert the sounds of another language when expressing words of a language (Rachmawati and Khasanah 2022). Phonological interference consists of letter reduction phonological interference, letter addition phonological interference, and letter alternation phonological interference. This study will examine the phonological interference of Thai speakers, namely students from Rungtarun Islam Wittaya School, who recite an Indonesian poem entitled “Guru adalah Lampu”
English version of the poem:

“The teacher is a lamp”

*When there was no light
When I didn't know any words
When I couldn't write a single number
You were present
Bringing me a lamp to light my soul*

Indonesian version of the poem:

“Guru adalah Lampu”

*Ketika tak ada secerah Cahaya
Ketika aku belum mengenal rangkaian kata
Ketika aku tak mampu menuliskan satupun angka
Kau hadir
Membawakan aku sebuah pelita penerang jiwa*

Based on the data analysis, several consistent phonological interference patterns were found in the articulation of Indonesian poetry by Thai speakers. The findings can be described as follows:

Analysis of reader “A” reading of the poem:

- Change of consonant letter “l” at the end of the word to “n”. The word “mengenal” changes to “mengenan”
- Difficulty in pronouncing the consonant “r” at the end of words, such as in the word present the consonant “r” is not visible.
- Addition of vowels to words ending in consonants. Syllable structures in Thai mostly end in vowels, in contrast to Indonesian which has many words ending in consonants. Thai speakers tend to drop the final

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- consonant or add a vowel after the final consonant.
- d. Vagueness of Emotive Emphasis Contrast
Issue: In poetry, emphasizing words like “tak”, “belum”, or “mampu” is emotionally important. Thai phonological interference can cause these words to not be emphasized strongly enough, so the meaning of rejection or helplessness is blurred.
Ketika aku belum mengenal rangkaian kata
It can even sound flat, when there should be emphasis on "belum".
- e. Chant Rhythm Shift
Issue: Thai has a shorter syllable structure and is monomorph (one beat). When reciting poetry in Indonesian, the rhythm can become more clipped and less flowing, as the stress and length of the vowels are adjusted to the Thai pattern.
Instead of flowing:
Ketika aku belum mengenal rangkaian kata
Will be heard: KE-ti-KÁ / A-kú / BE-lúm / me-ne-NÁL / RÁNG-kai-an / KÁ-ta
- f. Inaccurate Emphasis on the Verb
Problems: Verbs such as “mampu”, “menuliskan”, “membawakan” can be incorrectly stressed on the final syllable, in accordance with Thai language tendencies.
Ketika aku tak mampu menuliskan satupun angka
To: me-nu-lis-KÁN → gives a different or unnatural impression in Indonesian intonation.
- g. Emotion Removal due to Flat Intonation
Issue: Thai tends to keep the pitch at a fixed level in order to maintain lexical meaning. In Indonesian poetry, changes in intonation are used to convey feelings. When this doesn't happen, the poem sounds bland.

Analysis of reader “B” reading of the poem:

- a. In some words such as “ketika”, “ada”, “pelita”, the letter a is replaced with the vowel o to become “ketiko”, “ado”, “pelito”.
- b. Tone Emphasis on Initial Words Consistently
Problem: Thai is a tonal language, where each syllable has a fixed pitch. As a result, Thai speakers may put tonal stress on the first word in each line such as:
Ketika taka da secerah bahaya
This can make the word "Ketika" sound like the climax of the sentence, when in meaning and structure, it is an introduction to time.
- c. Inaccurate Emphasis on the Verb
Problems: Verbs such as “mampu”, “menuliskan”, “membawakan” can be incorrectly stressed on the final syllable, in accordance with Thai language tendencies.
Ketika aku tak mampu menuliskan satupun angka

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To: me-nu-lis-KÁN → gives a different or unnatural impression in Indonesian intonation.

d. Chant Rhythm Shift

Issue: Thai has a shorter syllable structure and is monomorpic (one beat). When reciting poetry in Indonesian, the rhythm can become more clipped and less flowing, as the stress and length of the vowels are adjusted to the Thai pattern.

Instead of flowing:

Ketika aku belum mengenal rangkaian kata

Will be heard: KE-ti-KÁ / A-kú / BE-lúm / me-ne-NÁL / RÁNG-kai-an / KÁ-ta

e. Emphasis Errors in Abstract Words

Issue: Words like “pelita”, “penerang” and “jiwa” have high symbolic meaning. In phonological interference, these words can sound too ordinary or lack nuance, if the emphasis falls not on the right syllable or if a flat tone dominates.

f. Emotion Removal due to Flat Intonation

Issue: Thai tends to keep the pitch at a fixed level in order to maintain lexical meaning. In Indonesian poetry, changes in intonation are used to convey feelings. When this doesn't happen, the poem sounds bland.

g. Unreasonable Emphasis on Auxiliary Words

Problems: Words like “aku”, “tak”, “pun” can get overemphasized due to the Thai stress pattern at the end of a phrase or word. This can cause a shift in meaning, as in Indonesian, these auxiliaries are often light or supportive.

For example:

Tak PUN angka : the stress on “pun” makes it sound ironic, rather than a minimalist reinforcement.

Researcher interview to respondents about difficulties in reciting Indonesian poetry:

Interviewer: “What do you find most difficult when reciting poetry in Indonesian?”

Wi am: “For me... the most difficult thing is pronunciation. Sometimes I don't know how to pronounce words correctly. For example, the 'r' sound. Thai doesn't have the same 'r' as Indonesian. So, I sometimes pronounce “penerang” as “penelang”. My teacher told me it's wrong, but it's very hard on my tongue”.

Interviewer: “Are there any vowels that you are also confused about?”

Wi am: “Yes, especially side-by-side vowels, like 'ae'. In Indonesian. I have trouble pronouncing them together. I've also read poems and people

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laughed because the word sounded wrong so the meaning was different”.

Interviewer: “How did you learn to improve your pronunciation?”

Wi am: “I listen to a lot of audio or video of Indonesians reciting poetry. Sometimes I repeat it several times. I also practiced in class with friends. Our teacher also helps correct my pronunciation. But I still make mistakes, especially when I'm nervous in front of people”.

Interviewer: “Do you think the pronunciation mistakes interfere with conveying the meaning of the poem?”

Student: “I think so. If you mispronounce, people can misunderstand. My teacher told me that pronunciation is important so that the feelings in the poem can reach the listener”.

Interviewer: “Do you feel confident when reciting the poem now?”

Student: “I still don't feel confident. Because I've only read Indonesian poetry a few times. But I like to practice, even if I'm still wrong, I'm happy if people can understand what I mean. I also like poetry because I can learn new vocabulary and sounds in Indonesian”

This interview shows that pronunciation is a major challenge for Wi Am in reciting Indonesian poetry, especially on consonant and vowel sounds that are not common in her mother tongue. Despite facing phonetic barriers and a lack of confidence, Wi Am shows commitment and hard work to improve through practice and teacher guidance. Her awareness of the importance of pronunciation in conveying the meaning and emotion of poetry shows a deep understanding of the art of poetry reading, which provides a strong foundation for her future improvement.

Phonology in poetry is not just a matter of pronouncing words, but also plays a role in building the effect of musicality and beauty of sound. Elements such as alliteration (repetition of consonants), assonance (repetition of vowels), rhythm that adds to the aesthetics in poetry (Umairah et al., 2021) and word stress create harmony that reinforces the meaning and atmosphere of the poem. For example, the frequency of certain sounds can create a dramatic or calming effect that supports the message of the poem.

1. Negative Impact of Phonological Interference on Poetry Aesthetics

a. Disruption of Rhythm and Cadence

Poetry relies heavily on rhythm and cadence created by patterns of word stress and sound repetition. Phonological interference can change word stress and the pronunciation of vowels or consonants, so the rhythm of the poem becomes unbalanced. This

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makes the reading of the poem sound awkward and detracts from its musicality.

b. Loss of Alliteration and Assonance Effect

Alliteration and assonance are stylistic techniques that use consonant and vowel sound frequencies to create aesthetic effects. If phonological interference causes phoneme changes, the repetition of these sounds may be lost or changed, resulting in the expected aesthetic effect not being achieved. For example, the replacement of the phoneme /r/ with /l/ or the deletion of certain sounds can eliminate the sound pattern that the poet has designed.

c. Emphasis and Intonation Errors

Phonological interference often leads to errors in word stress and intonation, especially if the first language is a tonal language or has different stress patterns. These errors can change the connotative meaning and mood of the poem, making the message less effective.

d. Decreased Clarity and Understanding of Meaning

Sound changes due to phonological interference affect not only the aesthetics, but also the clarity of the poem's meaning. Sound mismatches can activate the meaning of words or phrases, making it difficult for the reader or listener of the poem to understand the message contained.

2. The Positive Impact of Phonological Interference on Poetic Aesthetics

Like a metal that has two sides, in addition to negative impacts, phonological interference also has a positive impact that can provide new colors for the creator and Indonesian poetry itself.

Enriching Rhythm and Sound

With the variation of sounds from other languages, Indonesian poetry can present more unique and diverse rhythmic patterns. This gives a new color in the appreciation of poetry that is not monotonous or rigid.

a. Bringing Local Color

Sound interference often brings regional or cultural characteristics into poetry. For example, the use of a Thai accent in a recitation or the use of local vocabulary with its typical pronunciation can add a sense of regional flavor, making the poem feel more authentic and rich in cultural identity.

b. Creative Explorations in Language

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Some poets deliberately use phonological interference to "play with sounds" - combining foreign or local sounds to form new aesthetics. This shows language experimentation that expands the traditional boundaries of Indonesian poetry.

c. Enhancing Emotional Appeal

Distinctive or unusual sounds due to interference sometimes create a stronger emotional effect. For example, the distinctive sound of a particular accent can add depth of feeling, familiarity, or longing to a poem's delivery.

d. Encouraging the Renewal of Poetic Aesthetics

In the modern literary world, the boldness of mixing different sounds and styles of speech creates new styles of poetry. Phonological interference can be one way to update the aesthetics of Indonesian poetry to make it more dynamic and adaptive to the changing times.

3. Implication for Learning and Reading Poetry

Vowel and consonant sounds in poetry contribute to the creation of aesthetic sound patterns and reinforce the connotative meaning of the poem. Therefore, phonological accuracy is crucial in the reading and creation of poetry.

The impact of phonological interference on poetic aesthetics demands special attention in language and literature learning, especially for foreign language speakers. Teaching phonetics and practicing proper pronunciation are essential to minimize interference and maintain the beauty of poetry when recited.

In learning poetry, it is important for teachers to be aware of these phonological interferences and pay special attention to the aspects of pronunciation and intonation. Some steps that can be taken include:

- a. Practice Pronunciation: Practice the pronunciation of Indonesian phonemes that do not exist in Thai, such as /r/ at the end of a syllable.
- b. Introduction to Rhythm and Cadence: Teaches the rhythm and cadence of typical Indonesian poetry, and how word stress affects the meaning and beauty of poetry.
- c. Application of Reading Techniques: Using reading techniques that emphasize word stress and proper intonation to maintain the aesthetics of the poem.

As for the Implications in Poetry Reading, Thai speakers need to pay attention to several things to maintain the aesthetics of Indonesian poetry:

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- a. Awareness of Tone: Realizing that Indonesian does not have a tone system like Thai, so the use of inappropriate tone can change the meaning of the poem.
- b. Proper Emphasis: Understand the importance of emphasizing on certain syllables to create a rhythm and cadence that suits the poem.
- c. Listening Practice: Listen to the recitation of a poem by a native Indonesian speaker to understand proper intonation and rhythm.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that phonological interference is a real challenge faced by Thai students when reciting Indonesian poetry. This interference occurs due to the difference in sound systems between the mother tongue (Thai) and the second language (Indonesian), which impacts the quality of pronunciation, clarity of meaning, and aesthetics of the poems. The most common forms of interference found include: Change of vowel letters /a/ to /o/, addition of vowels to consonant-ending words, syllable stress and intonation errors, changes in the rhythm of the poetry reading, and loss of emotional nuance due to flat intonation. These phenomena negatively affect the aesthetic elements of the poem, such as the loss of the effects of alliteration, assonance, rhythm, and the emotional meaning that the poet wants to convey. Conversely, in certain contexts, interference can also provide local color, add sound diversity, and encourage creative exploration in the delivery of poetry, thus creating a new, more inclusive aesthetic approach. Interviews with Thai students corroborated this finding that pronunciation was a major obstacle in reading poetry. Pronunciation errors not only reduce audience comprehension, but also lower the confidence of foreign readers. Therefore, it is important for BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers) teachers to pay special attention to the phonetic, intonation, and pronunciation aspects in learning literature, especially poetry. Through pronunciation training, familiarization with native speakers' recitation models, and teaching rhythm and word stress, foreign students are expected to be able to deliver Indonesian poetry more precisely and aesthetically.

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