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PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PHONOLOGICAL PROBLEMS FOR LOCAL LANGUAGE SPEAKERS OF EFL LEARNERS IN WEST NUSATENGGARA

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Abstract: Learning English is so challenging especially to native speakers whose language sounds inventories are different from English. It will have been worst when learners are not aware of their problems. This article aims at formulating pedagogical implications of the phonological problems faced by the EFL learners in pronouncing standard English. The data in this research were obtained from the pronunciation test towards 30 EFL learners, 10 from each local language background (Sasak, Sumbawan, and Bimanese). The explanation begins with describing the pronunciation problems faced by the EFL Learners during the process of acquiring English and then followed with presenting the pedagogical implications that the learners can do to cope with the problems. The first pedagogical implication is the pronunciation training of changing voiceless bilabial stop [p] to make voiced and voiceless labiodental fricative [v] and [f] of English. The second is the pronunciation training of changing voiced and voiceless dental stops [D] and [T] to make voiced and voiceless alveolar stops [d] and [t], and the third is the pronunciation training of changing front middle sound [E] to central middle sound [ə] and [ɛ]. These pedagogical implications must be under a systematic and intensive training requiring the students' awareness.

Keywords: Pedagogical implications; EFL learners; local language speakers
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INTRODUCTION

English is a unique language for its pronunciation which is not consistent with its written alphabets. This uniqueness causes difficult for non-English learners to learn the language. Many English learners have failed to learn English due to its inconsistency of its pronunciation and its written alphabets. Some studies have proved that this issue contributes to the failure of English Language Learning, especially to the EFL learners. (Swan & Smith, 2018) argued that the failure of English Language Learning is not caused by the unsystematic afford of learning, the inconsistency characteristics of phonological inventory of English, the patters of sound combinations, and stress and intonation pattern which are different from the language of the learners (mother tongue). The facts that phonological inventory of languages of the world varies from one to another also contribute much to the pronunciation failure of Standard English (Renaldi, Stefani, & Gulö, 2016). In summary, phonological characteristics of mother tongue plays an important role in the mastering English, especially in Second Language Acquisation (SLA) context (Keshavarz. & Abubakar, 2017).

No matter how difficult English pronunciation is, its speakers are increasing in numbers. English is the language of technology and information of the world. The demand of English has spread out to all aspects of human life and made English as a required language to jobs opportunities. These facts have changed the education policy of many countries of the world including Indonesian that considers English as an important language in curriculum at schools. However, the teaching of English in Indonesia remains challenging to most students because single curriculum policy seems not working well with the varieties languages and cultural background of students from region to region across the country. Based on the National

Evaluation of Indonesia 2021, the students' achievements of English subject varied across regions in Indonesia (Puspendik, 2021). It is assumed that this unsatisfied result occurred due to the curriculum requirement for students in big cities which complete facilities and good language input are the same with students in rural places.

Several studies have done to explore facts about problems of pronunciations of standard English in Indonesian context which limits the students to master English well. Some studies tried to identify the problems students faced when pronouncing English sounds and compare the phonological inventories between English and the language of the students in order to give alert to students and make them aware of their problems so that to anticipate and tackle with the problems effectively. With fully awareness of their pronunciation problems, students can easily and eventually learn to pronounce English better (Ambalegin & Suryani, 2018). Arafiq, Yusra, and Saputra (2020) found out that university students of three local language speakers in West Nusatenggara became aware that there were few English sounds which are difficult to pronounce and even may lead to the failure in performing English speaking skill. Hamidiyah and Arief (2006) also asserted that students in Banten were also aware of that some English sounds were difficult to pronounce.

The awareness of the problems in English pronunciation is not enough to make a better pronunciation. Fachun and Pengpeng (2009) stated that lack of awareness of the English phonological pattern can lead to the failure of English Language Learning. Therefore, students should be given a systematic pedagogical sequence of training practice which shows them how to perform pronunciation from their previous incorrect pronunciation points to the standard pronunciation of English. Like learning the other language skills, learning better English pronunciation requires an intensive systematic practice in an effective way until students find that their local language constrain does not impact on their English performance overall (Rofiq, 2016). Besides, it is also important to know what the students' ideas of how the pronunciation is thought (Le, 2022). In addition, (Tsojon & Aji, 2014)emphasized that foreign language learners must change a conceptual pattern of pronunciation of English that fit for their first language that they have internalized in childhood. Therefore, an innovative approach to EFL on the bases of local language problems is needed as an alternative to the teaching of English. In addition, Keshavarz and Keshavarz (2022) found out that with a good planning of instructions through immersion program, EFL learners can gain better improvement of pronunciation. This paper tries to offer some pedagogical sequence of training for three local speakers of West Nusatenggara based on their pronunciation problems they have in their local language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Finegan (2008, p. 106) phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies the sounds of language and the extent to which phonetic differences can distinguish meaning and how the relationship between the sounds of language is spoken and how these sounds are recorded in the minds of the speakers and how the sounds are arranged to form words. -say. Meanwhile, According to Muslich (2008, p. 1), phonology is a linguistic study that studies the sounds of words. Meanwhile, according to Amril and Ermanto (2007, p. 8), phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies the sounds of language, both the language of advanced societies and primitive societies in all forms and aspects.

Phonology is a very important linguistic aspect in a language. This is because language is essentially a collection of sounds arranged in such a way that it forms speech from the level of words (morphemes), phrases (phrases) and sentences (sentence), and text (discourse). Therefore, when speakers of one language try to learn another language, it is important to pay attention to the sounds of the language that they want to learn. Especially if the phonological difference between the mother tongue and the language being studied is significantly different.

This certainly affects someone in acquiring a foreign language. The following studies prove how the phonological elements of the mother tongue affect the acquisition of a foreign language.

Research conducted by Anjarningsih and Sarahayu (2015)on the influence of Japanese on how to pronounce English sounds. This study found that the mother tongue influences the production of foreign languages and causes differences in the pronunciation of the target language. By using the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, Anjarningsih and Sarahayu, found that there was a change in the purchase of vowels, the addition of syllables, and a change in the location of vocal articulation on 3 songs belonging to AKB48 (a singing group originating from Japan), namely Heavy Rotation, Sugar Rush, and Namida Suprise. replacement of consonants with other consonants, and deletion of consonants occurred in all three songs.

Renaldi, Stefani, and Gulo (2016) also conducted research on the effect of mother tongue phonology on learning English, especially speaking skill competence. This research was conducted by conducting a survey on language exposure in the form of talks, speeches, and sample presentations. The data from the language exposure survey is then identified to see potential forms that are difficult for the sample. Then the results of this identification are continued by asking the sample to say and record, then deepen it again with interviews to ascertain the difficulties faced by the sample. The results of this study indicate that the phonological problems faced by objects are mostly related to consonant sound problems, such as voiced, dental fricative, *voiceless dental fricative, voiceless post-alveolar fricative*, and voiced alveolar approximant sounds. These are among the phonological characteristics found in this study.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Ryu (2002)on the problems faced by adult learners of English in Japan. Ryu thinks that apart from biological barriers (related to the speech apparatus), pronunciation learning in English needs to be improved (a paradigm shifts in pronunciation learning in the classroom) without neglecting the emphasis on acquiring speaking skills in general. Therefore, segmental sounds as a sub-component of the phonology of the second language (target language), both qualitatively and quantitatively are deemed necessary to get more attention. In addition, suprasegmental sound characteristics, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation have a very large influence on the pronunciation of the target language.

The next related research is that conducted by Keshavarz and Khamis (2017) which was conducted to identify the pronunciation barriers experienced by Hausa speakers in Nigeria in producing English sounds. There are 60 speakers of the Hausa language used as subjects in this study who are studying English from three universities in *Northern Cyprus*. The results of elicitation of English pronunciation problems conducted by means of this pronunciation test show that native speakers of Huasa Language have difficulty pronouncing vowels (/ʌ/, /ɔ:/ and /ɜ:/) and consonant sounds (/f/, / v/, /θ/ and /ð/). The results of this study also support the theory that the main nature of the negative transfer of errors is caused by the influence of the mother tongue. The results of this study have pedagogical implications for teachers and in designing syllabus and especially for speakers of the Hausa language.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is qualitative-quantitative descriptive which tries to explore and describe phenomena in a particular group (Craswell, 2014). There were 30 EFL learners of the sample who speak three major local languages in West Nusatenggara (Sasaknese, Sumbawan, and Bimanese) who had been learning English for several years. The data were the English segmental sounds which are produced by the samples. The samples were asked to pronounce the basic words, word formation, phrases, and sentences. During the pronunciation test, the recorder was on to make the sounds of the languages documented. This data were transcribed

both literally and phonetically. The data were analysed descriptivly with camparing the sample productions with the Standard English ones using Comparative Analisis Hypothesis introduced by Lightbown & Spada (2011) and Khansir (2012). This way the data can be easily identified, classified, and described.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The pronunciation problems that the EFL learners of the Sasak, Sumbawan, and the Bimanese speakers are not great in numbers. The problems the learners have vary between local language background. For most of the Sasak learners, bilabial fricative /f/ and /v/ are difficult and for a few Sumbawan learners. Meanwhile, the Bimanese learners do not find something difficult for the sounds to pronounce. The other consonant sounds are alveolar stop /t/ and /d/ which are problematic for almost all the Bimanese learners, a few Sumbawan learners but not for the Sasak learners. The problems are illustrated in figure 1 below.

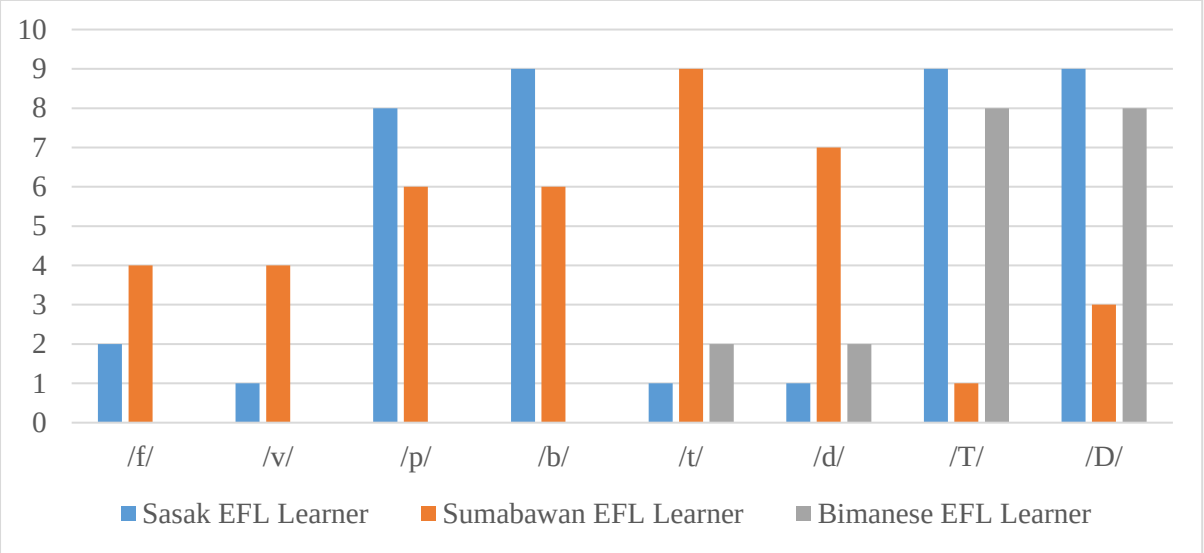

Figure 1. Distributions of problematic English consonants produced by EFL learners of three local language speakers in West Nusa Tenggara

The problems are also found in the production of vowels. There are two vowels which are difficult to produce, producing open middle central vowel /ə/ and half open middle central-tensed vowel /ɜ:/. These sounds do not affect at all for the Sasak EFL learners and effect a few of Sumbawan EFL. However, the sounds are very much effect on the Bimanese EFL learners having all of the learners could not make exactly the same sound of standard English. The problems are illustrated in the following figure.

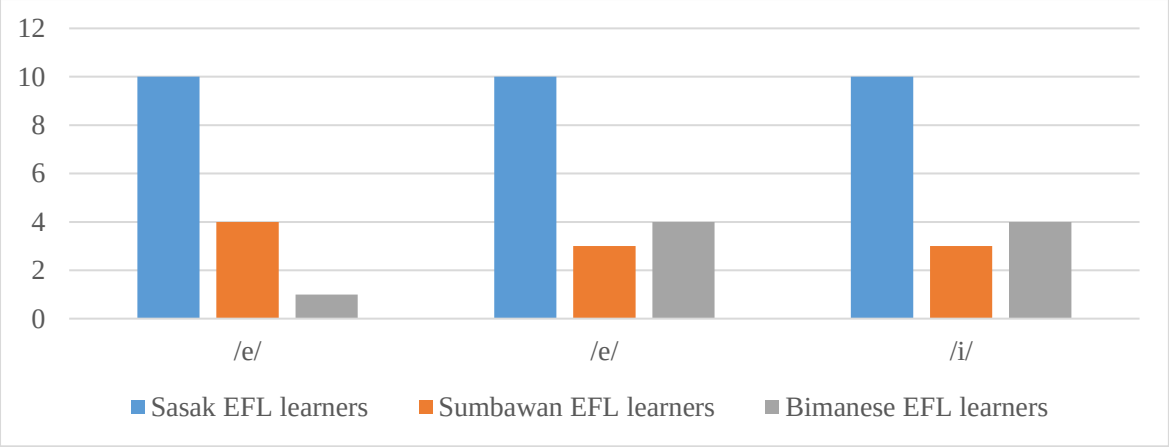

Figure 2. Distributions of problematic English consonants produced by EFL learners of three local language speakers in West Nusatenggara

Pronunciation problems encountered by the EFL learners of three local language speakers in West Nusatenggara

The discussions begin with presenting the phonological problems faced by the learners (Sasaknese, Sumbawan, and Bimanese) which were obtained through the test and observation in order to shed a light on the problems that the learners have.

Problems related to consonants

The distributions of the problematic consonants above, these consonants cause the learners fail to produce standard English (AE or BE) (Arafiq, Yusra, & Saputra, 2020). The following are words where the consonants occur.

Table 1. The English words and problematic consonants

No	English Consonants	Words	Sasaknese pronunciation	Sumbawan pronunciation	Bimanese pronunciation
1	/f/	Further	/*p*əðər/	/*p*əðər/	/*f*eðər/
2		Confortable	/kən*p*ortebəl/	/kən*p*ortebəl/	/kən*f*ortebəl/
3		Half	/hʌl*p*/	/hʌl*p*/	/hʌl*f*/
4	/v/	Variation	/*p*arieiʃən/	/*p*arieiʃən/	/*v*arieiʃən/
5		Evening	/i*p*ining/	/i*p*ining/	/i*v*ining/
6		Wave	/wei*p*/	/wei*p*/	/wei*v*/
7	/d/	Deak	/*d*i:k/	/*D*i:k/	/*D*i:k/
8		Ladder	/læ*d*ər/	/læ*D*ər/	/læ*D*ər/
9		Read	/ri:*d*/	/ri:*D*/	/ri:*D*/
10	/t/	Task	/*t*ʌsk/	/*T*ʌsk/	/*T*ʌsk/
11		Letter	/letər /	/le*T*ər /	/le*T*ər /
12		Cate	/kæt/	/kæ*T*/	/kæ*T*/

The above data shows how that there are two English consonants which are problematic to produce by both the Sasak and Sumbawan EFL Learners. The sounds are fricative labiodental voiceless /f/ and fricative labiodental voiced /v/. Fricative labiodental voiceless /f/ as in /*f*əðər/ pronounced with /*p*əðər/ and /*f*enomenə/ with /*p*enomenə/ in initial position, /kən*f*ortebəl/ pronounced with /kəm*p*ortebəl/ and /sə*f*istikeitəd/ with /sə*p*istikeitəd/ in the middle, /stʌ*f*/ pronounced with /stʌ*p*/, and /hʌl*f*/ with /hʌl*p*/ in the last position. Meanwhile, labiodental fricative voiced /v/ as in /*v*arieisən/ pronounced with /*p*arieisən/ in initial position, /i*v*iniŋ/ with /i*p*iniŋ/ in the middle, and wei*v*/ with /wei*p*/ in the last position. This evidance suggests that Sasak learners generalize the sounds by their place of articulations rather than

manner and voicing. Keshawarz and Khamis (2017), for instance found that Hausa-speaking learners mispronounced /f/ with /p/ since this sound does not exist in Hausa. Herman (2016) also found that Senior High School students of Pematangsiantar in Indonesia faced difficulties in pronuncing labiodental fricative /f/ and /v/.

Meanwhile, the Bimanese EFL learners do not encountered any problem when pronouncing the words where labiodental fricative occur. However, what makes the Bimanese EFL learners difficult to pronounce is the pronunciation of words which consist of alveolar plosive voiced /d/ as in /*d*i:k/ /læ*d*ər/, and /ri:*d*/ alveolar plosive voiceless /t/ as in /tʌsk/, /letər/ and /kæt/. These sound were mispronounced with labiodental plosive voiced /D/, labiodental plosive voicelss /T/. The alternation of alveolar plosive voiceless /t/ and alveolar plosive voiced /d/ were pronounced with labiodental plosive voiced /D/, labiodental plosive voicelss /T/ which are closed to the Bima Language sounds. The following shows the features of the sounds and illustrate how the alternations were made. The choice of dental stop voiceless /T/ for alveolar stop voicelss /t/ and dental stop voiced /D/ for alveolar stop voiced /d/ are the most possible alternations which the Bimanese learners could make as they share very close point of articulations.

Problems related to vowels

Like consonants, vowels that are problematic for EFL learners of three local language speakers in West Nusatenggara are also not many. However, they have caused the failure in learning English, especially, pronunciation. The vowels are all the schwa sounds as presented in the following table.

Table 2. English words and problematic vowels

No	English Consonants	Words	Sasaknese pronunciation	Sumbawan pronunciation	Bimanese pronunciation
1	/ə/	mother	/mʌth*ə*r/	/mʌth*e*r/	/mʌthEr/
2		possible	/posib*ə*l/	/posib*e*l/	/posibEl/
		earn	/*ə*rn/	/*ə*rn/	/I*r*n/, /*E*rn/
3	/ɜ:/	girl	/g*ɜ:*rl/	/g*ɜ:*rl/	/girl/, /g*ɜ:*rl/
4		bird	/b*ɜ*:d/	/bir:d/; /ber:d/	/bir:d/; /ber:d/
5		earn	/*ɜ:*rn/	/i:rn/; /e:rn/	/i:rn/; /e:rn/

For Sasak EFL learners, the vowels above are not difficult to pronounce because the Sasak Language has the sounds in its sound inventory. However, for the Bimanese and Sumbawan EFL learners producing open middle central vowel /ə/ and half open middle central-tensed vowel /ɜ:/ is such a big difficult. These schwa sounds are always pronounced with both open middle front vowel /e/ and close front vowel /i/. Rahal (2014) found that Tunisian English learners encountered mispronunciation of half open-middle central vowel /ə/ or schwa sound.

It is interesting to explain that the evidance found in Sumbawan shares the same mispronunciation sounds in both neighbour languages. There are 2 of 10 Sumbawan students encountered the mispronunciations of labiodental fricative voiceless /f/ and labiodental fricative voiced /v/ with bilabial plosive voiced /p/ as encountered by Sasak students as shown in the following. Bilabial stop voiceless /p/ is the only applicable sound that Sumbawan speaking learners could afford for both labiodental fricative voiced and labiodental fricative voiceless /v/ and /f/ as the Sasak sepaking learners could. The alternations of the sounds is drawn in the following. The other 2 students encountered the problems in pronouncing half open middle central vowel /ə/ with open middle front vowel /e/ and half open middle central-tensed vowel /ɜ:/ with close front vowel /i/ as Bima speaking learners did. The following are

English words which Sumbawan speaking learners misprounced as Bima speaking learners also did.

Pedagogical implications for EFL learners of three local language speakers in West Nusatenggara

This section illustrates pedagogical implications based on the phonological problems that ESL students of local language speakers of West Nusatenggara encountered. These pedagogical implications contain sequences of pronunciation training based on the problematic sounds the learners have under local phonological considerations.

Pedagogical implication related to the pronunciation of English voiceless fricative labiodental [f] and voiced fricative labiodental [v]

The pronunciation of voiceless fricative labiodental [f] and voiced fricative labiodental [v] are difficult for Sasaknese and Sumbawan students because the sounds do not occur in the Sasaknese and Sumbawan phonology inventories. These sounds are also difficult for Pemantang Siantar Students in another part of Indonesia (Herman, 2016). Sasaknese and Sumbawan students tend to pronounce these two sounds as voiceless stop bilabial [p]. In order to make a close pronunciation of voiceless fricative labiodental [f] and voiced fricative labiodental [v] in English words, the Sasaknese students should do the following steps.

a. Make the lower lip touches with the upper teeth but not the lower lip and the upper lip.
b. Almost block the airstream and having it push the very narrow opening which causes the frictions results.
c. As the air pushes from the lung through the trachea to the larynx, the vocal cords should be spread apart so that it lets the air passes in between them unimpeded and give no vibration effect (voiceless) [f] and when the vocal cords are drawn together, the air pushes them through creating the vibration effect (voiced) [v].

The comparation between the pronunciation of the fricative labiodental [f] and [v] with bilabial stop [p] can be seen from the following figure.

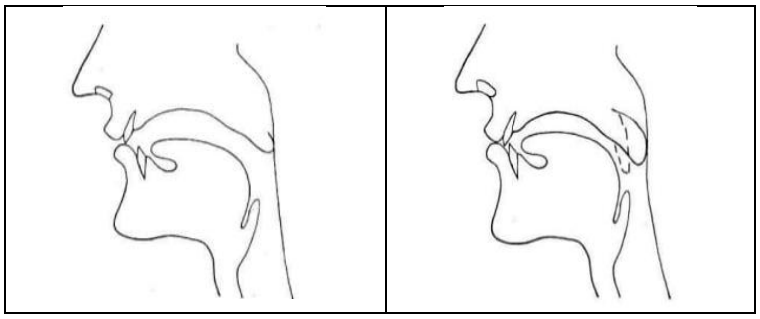

Figure 3. The pronunciation of labiodental [f] vs bilabial [p]

Pedagogical implication related to the pronunciation of English voiceless stop alveolar [t] and voiced stop alveolar [d]

The pronunciation of English voiceless stop alveolar [t] and voiced stop alveolar [d] for Bimanese students is a bit difficult. This sound is pronounced with placing the tip of the tongue just on the upper teeth root which makes it sounds not like the normal English pronunciation. This sound hears more like dental rather than alveolar. So that, to make this sound production become alveolar, the are some considerations to follow.

a. The front of tongue is placed on the alveolar ridge, the rough and bony ridge behind the teeth not on the upper teeth root.

b. The airstream is blocked very briefly then release it abruptly.
c. As the air pushes from the lung through the trachea to the larynx, the vocal cords should be spread apart so that it lets the air passes in between them unimpeded and give no vibration effect (voiceless) [t] and when the vocal cords are drawn together, the air pushes them through creating the vibration effect (voiced) [d].

The comparation between the pronunciation of the alveolar stop [t] and [d] with dental stop [T] and [D] can be seen from the following figure.

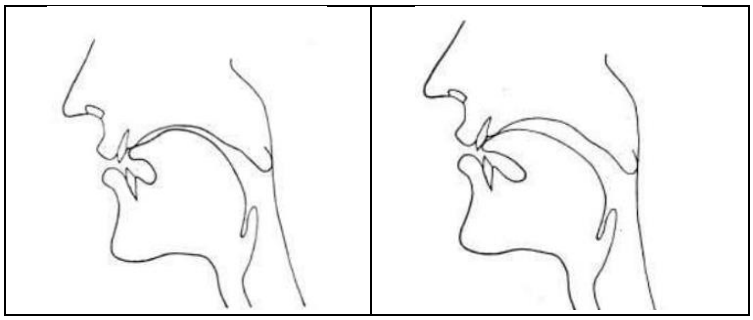

Figure 4. The pronuncitaion of alveolar stop [t] vs dental stop [T]

Pedagogical implication related to the pronunciation of English central middle sound [ə] and [ɛ]

The pronunciation of English central middle vowels can be difficult for Bimanese and Sumbawan students. These two vowels are often pronounced as front middle sound. Similarly, Tunisian learners often commit the same incorrect pronunciation of the schwa sounds (Rahal, 2014). In order to produce these two sounds better, the following points need to put as consideration.

a. The tongue is moving back from the initial position.
b. The mouth is not open so that it makes the jaw is a little raising as the air is pumped by the lung.

The comparation between the pronunciation of central middle vowel [ə] and [ɛ] can be seen from the following figure.

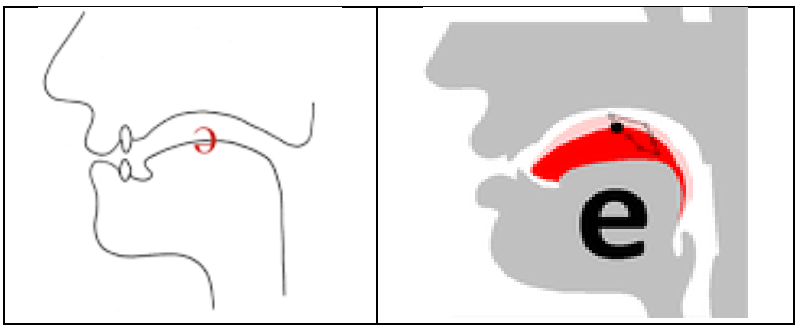

Figure 5. The pronunciation of central middle vowel [ə] and front middle vowel [E]

The pronunciation of English language performed by non-native speakers often result in as a strange English sound (Keshavarz. & Abubakar, 2017); (Lightbown & Spada, 2011). The pedagogical implications to the improper English sound production must be drawn in order to make it as closer as the standard English productions. The implications vary from one language to another depends on the problems the learners encountered and the sound inventories the languages of the learners. The problems found ranges from pronunciation from basic words to sentences from consonants to vowels sounds.

For vowel problems, Bimanese students found central middle English (schwa) sound problematic as Batak Toba students did (Ambalegin & Suryani, 2018). This fact suggested that the Bima Language and the Batak Toba Language might have the same vowel sound central front [E] in their language inventories but not having the central middle vowel in English [ə]. The voiced and voiceless dental stops [T] and [D] in the Bima Language phonology inventory seem unique as no studies has found them in another languages.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the phonological problems encountered by EFL learners of three local language speakers in West Nusantenggara are not great in numbers. However, the problems cause the failure in English learning. Labiodental fricative /f/ and /v/ are problematic consonants sounds for both Sumbawan and Sasak learners but not for the Bimanese. Meanwhile, consonants sound alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ are problematic for the Bimanese only. However, schwa sounds /e/ and /ɛ/ are problematic for both the Bimanese and a few Sumbawan but not for the sasaknese. There are three pedagogical implications to be drawn regarding to the problems encountered by the EFL learners of three local speakers of West Nusatenggara. The first implication is made to train the pronunciation of English voiced labiodental fricative [v] and voiceless labiodental fricatives [f] from the Sasaknese and Sumbawan voiceless bilabial stops [p]. The second implication is made to train the English voiced alveolar stops [d] and voiceless alveolar stops [t] from the Bimanese voiced dental stops [D] and voiceless dental stops [T]. The third implication is made to train with English central middle sounds (schwa sound) /e/ and /ɛ/ from the Bimanese front middle sound [E]. This pedagogical implication is not the only way to pronounce English better. However, intensity and personal awareness of EFL during the training are also the other efforts which escalate the process of being more like native English speakers. In addition, what makes a better performance in speaking, especially pronunciation is not the precise of pronouncing segmental sounds only but also the suprasegmental sounds, such as intonation, stress, rhyme, and others. So further study is needed to identify how local language English learner deals with suprasegmental sounds of English.

Declaration of conflicting interest
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest during the work of this research paper.

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