

**ENGLISH EDUCATION JOURNAL
(E2J)**

Research Journal

<https://www.ejournal.lppmunidayan.ac.id/index.php/english>

E-ISSN: 2686-3731

P-ISSN: 2460-0504

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Publisher:

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Faculty of Teacher Training and
Education
Universitas Dayanu Ikhsanuddin**

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Baubau, post code 93724
Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia

**LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF
INDONESIAN ENGLISH: EVIDENCE
FROM PEDIATRICIANS, TVRI
BROADCASTERS, AND
WAITRESSES**

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Article Info

Article history:

Received: 10/05/2025

Received in revised form: 24/05/2025

Accepted: 28/05/2025

Abstract

This research investigates the linguistic features of English variety used by Indonesian speakers in professional settings, specifically among pediatricians, South Sulawesi TVRI broadcasters, and waitresses. The research addresses how occupational background and first language influence the use of English in spoken interactions. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through recorded interviews with seven participants from the three professions. The analysis focused on phonological, lexical, and syntactic features, revealing a range of linguistic phenomena such as vowel shifts, glottal stops, and code-switching, which reflect both regional accents and the speakers' social contexts. Notably, pediatricians showed phonological transfer from regional languages like Butonese and Buginese, while broadcasters demonstrated lexical borrowing and occasional formal register inconsistency. Waitresses exhibited simpler sentence structures with noticeable pronunciation influences from their vernaculars. The findings highlight how English spoken by Indonesian professionals is shaped not only by linguistic competence but also by sociolinguistic variables such as occupation, regional origin, and communicative purpose. This research contributes to the understanding of World Englishes and emphasizes the importance of sociolinguistic awareness in teaching and evaluating English proficiency in multilingual societies.

Keywords: English Variety, Linguistic Features, Occupational Speech, Sociolinguistics, World Englishes.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fitur linguistik varietas bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh penutur Indonesia dalam konteks profesional, khususnya di kalangan dokter anak, penyiar TVRI Sulawesi Selatan, dan pelayan restoran. Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana latar belakang pekerjaan dan bahasa ibu memengaruhi penggunaan bahasa Inggris dalam interaksi lisan. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara tercatat dengan tujuh peserta dari ketiga profesi tersebut. Analisis difokuskan pada fitur fonologis, leksikal, dan sintaksis, yang mengungkapkan berbagai fenomena linguistik seperti pergeseran vokal, hentian glotal, dan pergantian kode, yang mencerminkan aksent regional dan konteks sosial penutur. Secara menonjol, dokter anak menunjukkan transfer fonologis dari bahasa daerah seperti suku Buton dan suku Bugis, sementara penyiar menunjukkan peminjaman leksikal dan ketidakkonsistenan register formal sesekali. Pelayan restoran menunjukkan struktur kalimat yang lebih sederhana dengan pengaruh pengucapan yang jelas dari bahasa daerah mereka. Temuan ini menyoroti bagaimana bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh profesional Indonesia dibentuk tidak hanya oleh kompetensi linguistik tetapi juga oleh variabel sosiolinguistik seperti profesi, asal daerah, dan tujuan komunikasi. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang varietas bahasa Inggris di dunia dan menekankan pentingnya kesadaran sosio-linguistik dalam pengajaran dan penilaian kemahiran bahasa Inggris di masyarakat multilingual.

Kata kunci: Varietas Bahasa Inggris, Ciri-ciri Linguistik, Bahasa Profesi, Sosio-linguistik, Varietas Bahasa Inggris di Dunia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a fundamental medium for communication, enabling individuals to express ideas, share thoughts, and convey intentions within society. In multilingual countries such as Indonesia, English has gained significant prominence, not only in educational settings but also across various professional fields. As a global lingua franca, English is utilized by Indonesian speakers in diverse occupational contexts,

and its usage is often marked by unique linguistic features shaped by the speakers' first language and sociocultural background.

Sociolinguistic studies have long emphasized the relationship between language and society. Wardhaugh [1] and Holmes [2] stress that the way people speak is influenced by social variables such as status, profession, and cultural context. Hudson [3] and Chaika [4] similarly argue that variations in speech are closely linked to social identity and communicative functions within particular communities. In the Indonesian context, recent research has explored aspects such as code-switching in digital communication [5] and the influence of native language on English pronunciation [6].

However, there remains limited scholarly attention to how English is spoken by professionals in real-world settings such as healthcare, media, and service industries. This gap reveals a lack of in-depth analysis on how English is variably used across occupations and how regional languages influence pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntactic structure.

This article presents a scientific renewal by examining the linguistic features of English as spoken by Indonesian professionals—specifically pediatricians, broadcasters at South Sulawesi TVRI, and waitresses. Unlike earlier studies that predominantly explored English use in formal education or elite contexts, this study sheds light on English variety within actual workplace interactions across multiple professions. Through the lens of sociolinguistics, the research provides a fresh perspective on how occupational roles, social settings, and vernacular backgrounds intersect to shape spoken English usage in Indonesia.

Based on these considerations, the core research problem addressed in this study is: How are the linguistic features of English variety manifested in the speech of Indonesian speakers across different professions (pediatrician, broadcaster, and waitress)? This research aims to describe the phonological, lexical, and structural features found in their English use and to

analyze the influence of their first language and occupational discourse.

The objective of this article is to identify and analyze the distinctive linguistic characteristics of English as spoken by Indonesian professionals from three different occupational backgrounds, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of English varieties in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research Design

This research was classified as qualitative and employed a descriptive approach. The aim was to systematically describe the linguistic features observed in the speech of Indonesian speakers in different professional contexts when using English. The research focused on three distinct professions: pediatricians, TVRI broadcasters, and waitresses. The qualitative nature of the research was aligned with the goal of understanding the nuances and patterns of English usage as influenced by the professional and sociolinguistic background of the speakers.

2.2. Data Collection

The data for this research were collected through interviews with individuals from the three target professions. The researchers visited the participants in their work environments to conduct the interviews, ensuring that the language used was authentic and contextually relevant. The data collection process involved both face-to-face and remote interviews. The interviews focused on topics related to the specific work environment of each participant, such as common practices in their professions and their perceptions of the importance of English in their field.

2.3. Sampling

The research used purposive sampling to select participants who represent the three target professions. A total of seven participants were interviewed: two pediatricians, three TVRI

broadcasters, and two waitresses. The selection of participants was based on their willingness to participate in the research and their professional background.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. The linguistic features of the participants' English speech were classified according to the influence of their native language, Indonesian, and the specific demands of their profession. The analysis focused on phonological, lexical, and grammatical features, such as pronunciation errors, vocabulary choices, and sentence structure. Each profession was analyzed separately, with the linguistic features of the pediatricians, broadcasters, and waitresses presented in distinct sections.

The analysis also considered the influence of the participants' social and professional context on their English usage. This allowed for a detailed exploration of how language varieties emerge within specific occupational settings and how they reflect broader sociolinguistic factors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Based on the data from the research, the researchers have organized the findings into a concise and structured table format for easy reference. This table highlights key linguistic features from the interviews conducted with pediatricians, TVRI broadcasters, and waitresses, categorized by pronunciation, lexical, and grammatical features

Table 1. Linguistic Features in the English Variety Used by Indonesian Speakers in Different Professions

Occupation	Pronunciation Features	Lexical Features	Grammatical Features
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Occupation	Pronunciation Features	Lexical Features	Grammatical Features
Pediatrician 1	Substitution of /v/ with /f/ (e.g., "fever" as "fiver")	Incorrect use of "civier" (should be "severe")	Lack of subject-verb agreement in "if the fever become worst"
	Glottal stop instead of alveolar stop (e.g., "not" as "nʔot")	Use of Indonesian words like "faringities" (should be "pharyngitis")	Incorrect word order due to direct translation from Indonesian ("bring to hospital" instead of "take to the hospital")
Broadcaster 1	Use of non-standard syntax (e.g., "handle two program" instead of "host two programs")	Direct translation of Indonesian phrases (e.g., "saya menhandle" as "I handle")	Non-standard sentence structures due to direct translation from Indonesian
Broadcaster 2	Glottal stop instead of dental fricative in words like "that", "south"	Code-switching between English and Indonesian, e.g., "boarding pass" in a local news broadcast	Omission of auxiliary verbs and articles in English due to Indonesian syntactic structures
Broadcaster 3	Substitution of /v/ with /f/	Mixing of local language terms with English	Misuse of plural forms, such as "program" instead of "programs"
Waiter 1	Use of incorrect adverb form (e.g., "goodly" instead of "well")	Use of transactional phrases for customer service (e.g., "thank you too" instead of "you're")	Frequent omission of articles (e.g., "I need to learn English" instead of "I need to")

Occupation	Pronunciation Features	Lexical Features	Grammatical Features
Waiter 2	Desire to improve English for better service; informal, transactional speech	Informal, non-standard expressions	Lack of subject-verb agreement in "I can serve them goodly"
	welcome")		learn the English")

This table succinctly summarizes the linguistic errors and influences observed in the English variety used by the participants from each profession. The findings indicate a consistent influence of Indonesian language structures, including phonological features (such as the substitution of /v/ with /f/), lexical choices (like direct translations from Indonesian), and grammatical errors (including issues with subject-verb agreement and word order).

These features reflect the participants' attempts to adapt their first language structures when speaking English in their respective professional contexts. Such findings contribute to a better understanding of how language varieties emerge in different occupational settings and the impact of native language interference.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1. Comparison with Existing Literature

This section provides an analysis of the research findings presented in the previous chapter, comparing them with existing literature, and offering a critical interpretation of the results. The research explored the linguistic features of English variety used by Indonesian speakers in three professions: pediatricians, TVRI broadcasters, and waitresses. These linguistic

features, encompassing pronunciation, lexical choices, and grammatical errors, were analyzed qualitatively, highlighting the influence of Indonesian language structures on English usage in these professional settings.

The findings of this research align with previous research on language interference, especially in the context of English language learners whose first language does not align structurally with English. For example, Wijaya [7] and Yusra & Sembiring [8] observed similar phonological errors among Indonesian speakers, particularly the substitution of the voiced /v/ sound with the voiceless /f/ sound. This phonological interference is consistent with the findings of the current study, where pediatricians, broadcasters, and waitresses exhibited similar substitutions, particularly when pronouncing words like fever. This is not surprising, as Indonesian lacks the /v/ phoneme, which makes it challenging for Indonesian speakers to differentiate between /v/ and /f/ when speaking English.

Furthermore, the lexical issues observed, such as direct translations of Indonesian phrases into English (e.g., *saya menhandle* as I handle) support the work of Setiawan [9], who emphasized the challenges that Indonesian speakers face when transferring vocabulary from their first language to English. These errors reflect a tendency to rely on Indonesian syntactic structures and vocabulary when speaking English, a phenomenon widely documented in the literature on language transfer [10]

In terms of grammar, the research's findings regarding subject-verb agreement and word order errors also reflect common issues reported in earlier studies on Indonesian

learners of English. Specifically, the use of sentences like “if the fever become worst” and “bring to hospital” is consistent with the findings of Subhan [11], who noted that Indonesian speakers often omit auxiliary verbs and use non-standard word order when speaking English due to the syntactic flexibility of Indonesian.

3.2.2. Novel Contributions

One novel contribution of this research is the exploration of the interaction between occupational demands and language use. While previous studies have focused on general language transfer issues among Indonesian learners of English, this study highlights how the professional context influences linguistic choices. For instance, the broadcasters exhibited a unique form of code-switching between Indonesian and English, especially when discussing technical terms such as a boarding pass. This phenomenon of code-switching, particularly in professional settings, is an area that warrants further investigation, as it may shed light on how bilinguals navigate between languages in work-related contexts [12].

Moreover, the research's examination of waitresses, a relatively underexplored group in sociolinguistic studies, provides valuable insights into how service workers rely on English in customer interactions, despite varying levels of proficiency. The use of functional and transactional English in the service industry reflects the increasing global reliance on English as a lingua franca in business and hospitality, particularly in regions like Makassar that attract international tourists.

3.2.3. Strengths of the Research

The main strength of this research lies in its detailed examination of linguistic features across multiple professions, offering a nuanced view of how English is used in professional settings by Indonesian speakers. By focusing on specific occupational contexts, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on English language use in non-academic settings, particularly in Indonesia. The qualitative approach, including in-depth interviews with professionals, provided rich data that allowed for a deeper understanding of how language is shaped by both social and professional factors.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the linguistic features of English variety used by Indonesian speakers in pediatrician, TVRI broadcaster, and waitress professions. The findings emphasize the significant role of language transfer, particularly from Indonesian to English, and highlight the influence of professional contexts on English language use. While the study's small sample size and reliance on self-reported data pose limitations, it offers a solid foundation for future research on English usage in Indonesian professional settings. Future studies could build on these findings by exploring larger, more diverse samples and incorporating additional methods of data collection to enrich our understanding of this phenomenon.

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