



# Correlation Between Bilingualism and Pronunciation: A Study of Seventh Grade Junior High School Students

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2025-12-08 Revised: 2026-01-15 Published: 2026-02-16	<p>This study aims to examine the correlation between bilingualism and English pronunciation skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 21 Mataram. The subjects were 32 students, including 20 bilingual students proficient in both Indonesian and English. Primary data were collected through pronunciation tests at the word, phrase, and sentence levels, while secondary data included students' demographic information. Quantitative analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, including mean, median, mode, range, and percentage of pronunciation performance. The results indicate that students' overall pronunciation ability is in the fair category, with bilingual students generally achieving higher scores: 55% for word-level, 62% for phrase-level (stress and linking), and 59% for sentence-level (fluency and intonation). These findings suggest that students' first language influences their pronunciation, causing certain errors to persist. This study provides an overview of pronunciation skills and bilingual usage in the classroom and offers a foundation for further research and the development of more effective English teaching strategies.</p>
<b>Keywords:</b> <i>Bilingual Students;</i> <i>English pronunciation;</i> <i>English Education.</i>	

Artikel Info	Abstrak
<b>Sejarah Artikel</b> Diterima: 2025-12-08 Direvisi: 2026-01-15 Dipublikasi: 2026-02-16	<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui korelasi antara bilingualisme dan kemampuan pengucapan bahasa Inggris siswa kelas VII SMPN 21 Mataram. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 32 siswa, dengan 20 siswa bilingual yang fasih berbahasa Indonesia dan Inggris. Data primer diperoleh melalui tes pengucapan kata, frasa, dan kalimat di kelas, sedangkan data sekunder berasal dari informasi demografis siswa. Analisis kuantitatif dilakukan menggunakan statistik deskriptif, termasuk mean, median, mode, range, dan persentase kemampuan pengucapan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas pengucapan siswa secara umum berada pada kategori wajar, dengan siswa bilingual cenderung memiliki skor lebih tinggi: 55% untuk kata, 62% untuk frasa (stress dan linking), dan 59% untuk kalimat (fluency dan intonasi). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa penguasaan bahasa Inggris siswa dipengaruhi oleh penggunaan bahasa pertama mereka, sehingga beberapa kesalahan pengucapan masih muncul. Penelitian ini memberikan gambaran mengenai kemampuan pengucapan siswa dan penggunaan bilingualisme dalam pembelajaran, serta dapat menjadi dasar untuk penelitian lanjutan dan pengembangan strategi pengajaran yang lebih efektif.</p>
<b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Siswa Bilingual;</i> <i>Pengucapan Berbahasa</i> <i>Inggris;</i> <i>Pendidikan Bahasa</i> <i>Inggris.</i>	

## I. INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism is generally defined as the ability to use two languages in daily communication with functional proficiency (Feng & Li, 2024; Wallner, 2016). In educational contexts, bilingual students are often required to alternate between their first language and a target language, such as English, which may affect their linguistic performance, including pronunciation.

In Indonesia, bilingualism is a common phenomenon due to the coexistence of local languages, Indonesian, and English, especially in formal education settings. In cities such as Mataram, students frequently use more than one language in both academic and social interactions (Jayanti & Sujarwo, 2019). Although bilingual exposure is believed to support

language development, many junior high school students still struggle to produce accurate English pronunciation.

Pronunciation plays a crucial role in oral communication, as it involves both segmental and suprasegmental features that affect intelligibility (Gilakjani, 2016; Ramelan, 2003). Previous studies indicate that Indonesian learners often demonstrate pronunciation errors influenced by their first language (Amin & Tsaqila, 2023; Arafiq et al., 2020). These errors may lead to misunderstandings and reduced communicative effectiveness.

Several studies have examined pronunciation errors among EFL learners and the influence of L1 interference. However, there is still limited research that explicitly investigates the

correlation between students' levels of bilingualism and their English pronunciation ability, particularly among junior high school students in the Indonesian context. Most previous research focuses on pronunciation errors or codeswitching practices without quantitatively examining how bilingual proficiency relates to pronunciation performance.

Therefore, this study investigates the correlation between bilingualism and English pronunciation ability among seventh-grade students at SMPN 21 Mataram. The study seeks to determine whether students with higher levels of bilingualism demonstrate better English pronunciation accuracy. Based on this objective, it is hypothesized that there is a significant correlation between students' bilingualism and their English pronunciation ability.

## II. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between students' bilingualism and their pronunciation ability. The research was conducted at SMPN 21 Mataram, involving 32 seventh-grade students of class A, of whom 20 students were identified as bilinguals. The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through a probing pronunciation test administered directly to the students, while secondary data were obtained from an observational checklist documenting students' language use during classroom interaction. Students' demographic data were provided by the school to support the research process.

The independent variable of this study was bilingualism, which was operationalized through indicators of students' speaking ability and their ability to articulate specific sounds in words and sentences during classroom communication. The dependent variable was pronunciation ability, measured through segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, including phoneme accuracy, word stress, word linking, intonation, fluency, and rhythm. To measure pronunciation ability, the study utilized a probing oral test designed to elicit students' spoken production at word, phrase, and sentence levels. Students' responses were assessed using an analytic scoring rubric with a five-point scale, ensuring consistent evaluation across all participants. The instrument's validity was established through content validity, as the

scoring rubric and indicators were developed based on pronunciation theories and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) framework. The instrument's reliability was maintained by consistently applying standardized scoring criteria throughout the assessment process.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, including the mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages. To examine the relationship between bilingualism and pronunciation ability, the study employed the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient. Pearson correlation was used because the data were numerical, and the significance level was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The results of the correlation analysis were interpreted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables.

In addition, qualitative data from classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis to support and contextualize the quantitative findings related to students' pronunciation patterns and language use.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

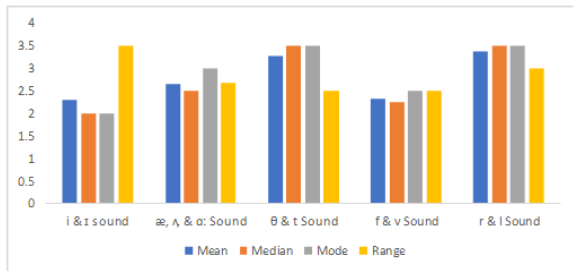
### A. Result

From the data, the classroom consists of 32 students, with 20 bilinguals (62.5%) and 12 monolinguals (37.5%). Among the bilingual students, 12 are male and 8 are female. During classroom activities, the teacher dominated English usage, occupying 88% of the class time, while students participated for 64% of the time. Student utterances were generally not always related to the classroom material. The use of bilingualism was observed to be frequent.

The results of the pronunciation tests are presented in Tables 1 to 3. At the word level, the total score of all students was 64 out of a maximum of 160, resulting in a mean score of 2, median of 2, mode of 2, range of 3, and a percentage of 40% (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Word-level Pronunciation Scores  
(n= 32)

Level	Total Score	Max Score	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Range
Word (Segmental)	64	160	40	2	2	2	3



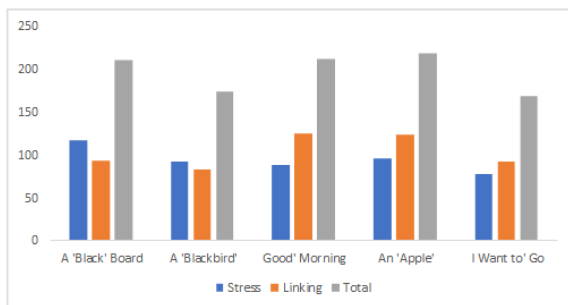
**Figure 1.** Average Result of Student Testing on Word by Word

**Note.** The number represents the average of how well they make sound in each word. The higher the chart means the students are easily pronounce the vowel and/or consonants.

At the phrase level, which assessed stress and linking, the total score of all students was 210 out of a maximum of 320. The mean score was 3.28, the median was 3.5, the mode was 7 and 8 (multimodal), the range was 5, and the percentage was 65.62% (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Phrase-level Pronunciation Scores (n = 32)

Level	Total Score	Max Score	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Range
Phrase (Stress & Linking)	210	320	65.62	3.28	3.5	7 & 8	5



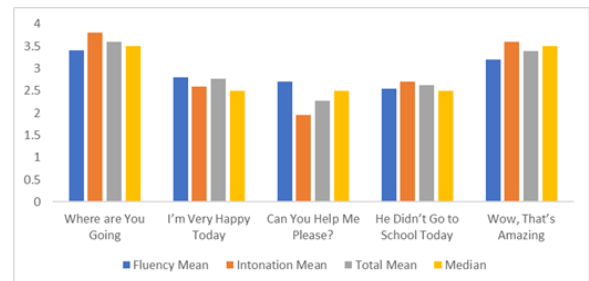
**Figure 2.** Sums Score of 32 Students on Phrase Level Testing

**Note.** The number indicates how well all students in stressing and linking the phrases. The higher the score, the class have good accuracy on phrases level.

For sentence-level testing, which measured fluency and intonation, the total score was 226 out of 320. The mean score was 3.53, the median 3.5, mode 7, range 4, and the percentage 70.62% (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Sentence-level Pronunciation Scores (n = 32)

Level	Total Score	Max Score	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	Mode	Range
Sentence (Fluency & Intonation)	226	320	70.62	3.53	3.5	7	4



**Figure 3.** Average Score of 32 Students on Short Sentence Testing

**Note.** The number indicates how fluent and native-like students' pronoun the sentences. The higher the number, the better their fluency in general

A summary of the overall pronunciation statistics across word, phrase, and sentence levels is shown in Table 4. Word-level scores were combined from Appendix 6, phrase-level scores from Appendix 8, and sentence-level scores from Appendix 10. Percentages were calculated from total scores divided by the maximum possible scores. At the word level, the mean was 2.98, the median was 3, the mode was 2-3, the range was 1-5, and the percentage of 52.9%. At the phrase level, the mean was 3.29, the median 3.5, the mode 6-7 (multimodal), the range 4-9, and the percentage was 61.9%. Sentence-level scores had a mean of 3.25, median 3.5, mode 5-7 (multimodal), range 3-9, and a percentage of 55.2%.

**Table 4.** Summary of Mean, Median, Mode, Range, and Percentage

Level	Mean	Median	Mode	Range	Percentage (%)
Word (Appendix 6)	2.98	3	2-3	1-5	52.9
Phrase (Stress & Linking, Appendix 8)	3.29	3.5	6-7 (multimodal)	4-9	61.9
Sentence (Fluency & Intonation, Appendix 10)	3.25	3.5	5-7 (multimodal)	3-9	55.2

## **B. Discussion**

The influence of bilingualism on pronunciation is not always straightforward. While bilingual students in this study showed relatively fair to good pronunciation skills, their performance varied with factors such as L1 interference, confidence, and familiarity with target-language structures. Previous research suggests that even with high bilingual exposure, students may struggle with segmental and suprasegmental features due to transfer from their first language (Arafiq et al., 2020; Gilakjani, 2016).

Confidence in using English emerged as an important factor influencing pronunciation. Many students hesitated to speak or avoided using the target language fully, which may limit practice opportunities and hinder the automatization of pronunciation patterns. Several studies have found a relationship between learners' self-confidence and their speaking performance, showing that higher self-confidence is associated with better oral production, including pronunciation accuracy (e.g., a positive correlation between self-confidence and speaking ability) (Shaleha et al., 2025; Yesi & Mardiah, 2025).

Another contributing factor is the frequency and quality of exposure to English. Although bilingual students are regularly exposed to English in school, limited classroom interaction and short instructional time may not be sufficient to fully develop accurate pronunciation. This is consistent with findings by Amin & Tsaqiila (2023), who reported that students' pronunciation improvement is strongly associated with consistent input and practice outside the classroom.

The findings also highlight the role of L1 transfer in pronunciation challenges. Certain sounds that do not exist in Indonesian, such as postalveolar fricatives or long-short vowel distinctions, remain problematic for many students, which explains why bilingualism alone does not guarantee native-like pronunciation. This observation is in line with cross-linguistic studies on phonological interference (Spitzer, 2016; Tosuncuoglu & Ignatkina, 2020).

Pedagogically, these insights suggest that English teachers should provide targeted pronunciation instruction that addresses specific L1 transfer issues, emphasizes oral practice, and encourages confidence in

speaking. Classroom activities could include minimal pair drills, stress and intonation exercises, and communicative tasks that integrate meaningful context, ensuring both bilingual and monolingual students benefit equally.

In conclusion, bilingualism may provide certain advantages in language learning, such as increased metalinguistic awareness, but it does not automatically lead to better pronunciation. Factors such as L1 interference, limited exposure, and students' confidence must be considered when designing instructional strategies. Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of intensive pronunciation practice and the interaction between bilingual proficiency and oral fluency.

## **IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **A. Conclusion**

The analysis of seventh-grade students at SMPN 21 Mataram shows that bilingual students generally demonstrate fair pronunciation skills across word, phrase, and sentence levels. Bilingualism in the classroom appears to influence students' pronunciation patterns, with some interference from their first language observed in certain sounds. Although students have some exposure to the target language and can apply vocabulary learned outside the classroom, their fluency and accuracy remain limited. Overall, while bilingualism supports participation in classroom activities, it does not guarantee optimal development of pronunciation skills, and students tend to rely on patterns from their first language.

### **B. Suggestion**

Based on this study's findings, it is suggested that students pay closer attention to teachers' instructions and actively participate in classroom activities. Teachers are encouraged to provide more opportunities for students to use the target language naturally, allowing them to express new vocabulary voluntarily and gradually, rather than using the language as a tool to force participation. For future research, it is recommended to use more systematic methods, such as larger sample sizes or controlled experimental designs, to explore the relationship between bilingualism and pronunciation skills more rigorously. Additionally, developing a supportive

bilingual environment in the classroom is recommended, including consistent exposure to the target language and interactive activities that encourage student engagement and language use.

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