

## **LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE ON ENGLISH: [n] ARTICULATION OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Being familiar in “tahsin” rule in Arabic may have influenced ones in pronouncing regressive assimilation [n] in English. The study aims to identify the similarities and differences between English and Arabic with “tahsin” rules based on the place of articulation and to describe how the students of Mu’allimat program pronounce regressive assimilation [n] in English. The data collected are the English speech produced by the students of Mu’allimat program in PONPES Al Mukmin Ngruki Sukoharjo having “tahsin” background, especially English consonants and regressive assimilation [n] and Arabic “nun sakinah” law in “tahsin” rules. The data are analyzed by technique of comparing Arabic and English viewed from rules on phonetic base. The results show that (1) the similarities and differences between English consonant sounds and Arabic with “tahsin” rules lies in its place of articulation; and (2) the students of Mu’allimat program belonging to khalaqoh tahsinul qur’an have not always pronounced English regressive assimilation [n] better than those who don’t belong to khalaqoh tahsinul qur’an.*

**Key words:** *interference, regressive assimilation, tahsin.*

### **ABSTRAK**

*Terbiasa dalam menggunakan “tahsin” dalam Bahasa Arab dapat mempengaruhi seseorang dalam mengucapkan bunyi asimilasi regresif [n] dalam Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi persamaan dan perbedaan antara aturan-aturan bunyi yang ada di Bahasa Inggris dan “tahsin” dalam Bahasa Arab berdasarkan tempat artikulasi bunyi dan mendeskripsikan bagaimana siswa program Mu’allimat melafalkan bunyi asimilasi regresif [n] dalam Bahasa Inggris. Data penelitian ini berupa ujaran Bahasa Inggris oleh siswa program Mu’allimat di Ponpes Al Mukmin Ngruki Sukoharjo yang berlatar belakang “tahsin” khususnya antara bunyi konsonan dan bunyi asimilasi regresif [n] dalam Bahasa Inggris dan bunyi “nun sakinah” dalam “tahsin” dalam Bahasa Arab. Data tersebut dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik perbandingan Bahasa Arab dan Bahasa Inggris dilihat dari hukum-hukum fonetik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa (1) kesamaan dan perbedaan antara bunyi konsonan dalam Bahasa Inggris dan hukum “tahsin”*

dalam Bahasa Arab terletak pada tempat artikulasi bunyi, dan (2) siswa program Mu'allimat yang termasuk dalam kelompok khalaqoh tahsinul qur'an tidak selalu lebih baik dalam mengartikulasikan bunyi asimilasi regresif [n] dalam bahasa Inggris dari pada mereka yang tidak termasuk dalam kelompok khalaqoh tahsinul qur'an.

**Kata kunci:** *inteferensi, asimilasi regresif, tahsin.*

## 1. Introduction

In this world, it can be sure that people speak bilingually or speaking with two languages even multilingual or more than two languages. It occurs because of the formal education which the medium language uses a language that is different from the students' mother tongue, the interaction to others having different language, or a purpose of studying another language

Therefore, when people speak two languages, one must be their mother tongue and Arabic is a second language or foreign language. In another case, when people speak three languages, one must be their mother tongue and the two others are second language and foreign language, or both are foreign languages.

For example:

Dealing with this case, there are many educational institutions teaching foreign languages. Mu'allimat program in Ponpes AL MUKMIN is one of those which teach three languages, Indonesian, Arabic, and English. Indonesian is their mother tongue or first language; English and Arabic are their foreign languages. They study Arabic everyday since there is a program named *Arabic day* or almost everyday the students of Mu'allimat program speak in Arabic. Besides, there is a program named "tahfidhul Qur'an" (memorizing the verses in the holy Qur'an). In reciting the Qur'an, there are certain rules to have good and correct reciting. The rules are called

"tahsin" (articulating every sound in Arabic from the right place and manner of articulation). As a result, they study Arabic, more over when reciting the Qur'an, more than English. Shortly, they study Arabic with "tahsin" and English.

Starting from this fact, the writer is greatly interested in studying those who have background in "tahsin" when they speak in English especially in saying regressive assimilation [n]. Having good background here doesn't mean that they study Arabic earlier than English. It is not a matter of whether which Arabic or English is learned first, but since they believe that reciting the Qur'an makes them get merit from God, and they should recite it by applying "tahsin" rules, in order that the rules are quite rigid. Additionally, there is also an assumption that those who are good at "tahsin", they are automatically good at English since there is similarity in articulating some sounds of both.

In "tahsin" rules, there is "nun sakinah (ن)" law which is added to certain consonants following it, the "nun sakinah" sound will change into the sounds of the certain consonant. This condition is just similar to the regressive assimilation of the sound [n] when it is added to some words whose initial sound of which is also certain consonants.

Nevertheless, not all “nun sakinah” that changes into the consonant sound following it occurs in the English regressive sound [n] in which the consonant sounds of both are the same.

For example: Arabic : انزلن /anʒalna/  
English: London Zoo  
/lʌndəzu:/

In this study, the writer analyzes whether the students of Mu'allimat who are accustomed to pronounce in “tahsin” law are influenced to use such sounds change when they say regressive assimilation [n] in English. The case of assimilation is much discussed in the field of phonology, especially phonetics.

According to Walfram and Johnson (1982:8), phonetics is the study of the actual sounds of language. It provides the raw material and serves as the base for analyzing a phonological system. The study of phonetics covers identifying the speech sounds of a language, describing their production, differentiating the quality (its phonetic details) of each sound and practicing it, etc. The kind of phonetics underlying the study is Articulatory phonetics. It primarily concerned with the way in which sounds are produced by the human speech mechanism.

While McMahon (2002) states that phonetics provides objective ways of describing and analyzing the range of sounds humans use in their languages. More specially, articulatory phonetics identifies precisely which speech organs and muscles are involved in producing the different sounds of the world's languages. Those sounds are then transmitted from the speaker to the hearer, and acoustic and auditory phonetics focus on the physics of speech as it travels through the air in the form of sound waves, and the effect those waves have a hearer's ears and brain. It follows that pho-

netics has strong associations with anatomy, physiology, physics and neurology.

The production of speech sounds is accomplished through the simultaneous activity of a number of different anatomical organs, no one of which is exclusively designed for speech production. Producing a string of speech sounds involves:

(1) the *respiratory system*, composed of the lungs, the bronchial tubes, the trachea, diaphragm, and various muscles which help move air through the system; (2) the *larynx* (or “voice box”), which can provide voice for speech sounds, but which serves the additional function of sealing off the lungs to protect them or to make the chest more rigid while using the arms; and (3) the *articulatory system* (vocal tract), which includes the lips, teeth, tongue, and other parts of the mouth, also used for eating and breathing. These three systems combine to produce ones' speech sounds, and it is that we are interested in when we study articulatory phonetics.

From the elaborations above, it can be inferred that phonetics can be used to study how ones produced speech sounds through their speech organs consisting of passive and active articulatory.

Human speech organs play very important role in producing sounds. To produce correct and good pronunciation, the speech organ should work properly. Consonants involve a narrowing in the mouth which in turn causes some obstruction of the air stream (Avery and Ehrlich, 1997: 12). Consonants are sounds made by blocking the flow of air coming out from the lungs (Hancock, 1998: 4). Therefore, consonants are sounds that produced by blocking the air stream that flow through human speech organ.

In Arabic, similarly “tahsin” or the study of rules in reciting the Qur'an by articulating every sound in Arabic from the right place and

manner of articulation, is much enhanced to the learners who want to achieve good Arabic pronunciation.

According to Abdul Rauf (2006), the study of tahsin can be divided into ten elements:

- a. مخارج الحروف (Makharijul Huruf / the place of articulation)  
It consists of:
  - 1) فوجلا (Al Jauflu) : the sounds are produced from oral cavity
  - 2) الحلق (Al Halqu) : the sounds are produced from the larynx
  - 3) اللسان (Al Lisan) : the sounds are produced from the tongue
  - 4) اشفتات (As Syafatan) : the sounds are produced from lip/lips.
  - 5) الخيسوم (Al Khoisyum) : the sounds are produced from the nasal cavity
- b. صفات الحروف Sifatul Huruf / the characteristic of sounds
- c. Nun Sakinah [ن] Law and Tanwin[//]
- d. Mim Sakinah Law
- e. Mim Law and Nun Tasydid
- f. Lam Ta'rif Law
- g. Mad Law
- h. At Tafkhim and At Tarqiq
- i. Idghom
- j. Waqof (stop marker)

## 2. Research Method

Comparison is one of the most efficient methods for explicating or utilizing tacit knowledge or tacit attitudes. This can be done, for example, by showing in parallel two slides of two slightly different objects or situations and by asking people to explain verbally their dif-

ferences. The goal is to find out why the cases are different: to reveal the general underlying structure which generates or allows such a variation.

The object of this research is English regressive assimilation [n] and Arabic “nun sakinah” law in “tahsin” rules produced by the 4 students of Mu’allimat program in PONPES Al Mukmin Ngruki – Sukoharjo.

Technique of Data Analysis:

- a. To identify the similarities and the differences of English regressive assimilation [n] and Arabic “nun sakinah” law in “tahsin” rules, the writer studies what English consonant sounds are similar and different to Arabic sounds based on the place of articulation by using the phonetic theory of each language. Then, the similar sounds are classified into what similar sounds when words with final sound [n] meet words initiating consonants and when “nun sakinah” meet the similar sounds.
- b. To describe how the students of Mu’allimat program pronounce English Regressive assimilation [n], the writer refers to the recording done. Additionally, to make the result clearer, the writer conducts crosschecking by asking the samples to redemonstrate their pronunciation. In this technique, there is no more recording but taking note of sound [n] produced by each student. At last, the writer describes each sample’s sound [n] production. From here, the writer makes interpretation which sample having “tahsin” background pronounces correctly and which sample is not.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1 The Similarities and Differences of English and Arabic Alphabets Based on Place of Articulation

**Tabel 1 The Similarities and Differences of English and Arabic Alphabets Based on Place of Articulation**

No.	Alphabets Based on Place of Articulation		Analysis
1.	English	/b/ (by bringing the lower lip and the upper lip)	The two explanations mean one, that is using two lips each other.
	Arabic	/ب/ (by involving two lips)	
2.	English	/t/ (by involving the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge)	Alveolar ridge is similar to upper gums. The place of the organ speech is just the same. /t/ and /ت/ are produced from the same speech organ by involving the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge or upper gums.
	Arabic	/ت/ (by touching the tip of the tongue with the upper gums)	
3.	English	/d/ (by involving the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge)	Alveolar ridge is similar to upper gums. The place of the organ speech is just the same. /d/ and /د/ are produced from the same speech organ by involving the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge or upper gums.
	Arabic	/د/ (by touching the tip of the tongue with the upper gums)	
4.	English	/k/ (by contacting the back of the tongue and the velum)	Under the palate means velum. By touching the back of the tongue to the palate but the back of the tongue is more lowered in Arabic may mean touching the back of the tongue and the velum.
	Arabic	/ك/ (by touching the back of the tongue to the palate but the back of the tongue is more lowered)	
5.	English	/dʒ/ (by involving the blade of the tongue and the palatal)	From the explanation, it can be seen clearly the two sounds are similar that is by involving the blade of the tongue and the palate.
	Arabic	/ج/ (by touching the blade of the tongue and the palate)	

6.	English	/f/ (by placing the lower lip against the upper teeth)	Both sound similarly involves the lower lip and the upper teeth
	Arabic	/ف/ (by touching the lower lip to the upper teeth)	
7.	English	/θ/ (by touching the tip of the tongue to the upper teeth)	Basically, /θ/ uses the tip of the tongue with the tip of the upper teeth.
	Arabic	/ث/ (by touching the tip of the tongue to the tip of the front upper teeth)	
8.	English	/ð/ (by touching the tip of the tongue to the upper teeth)	The analysis is same as sound /θ/ and /ث/. Basically, /ð/ uses the tip of the tongue with the tip of the upper teeth.
	Arabic	/ذ/ (by touching the tip of the tongue to the tip of the front upper teeth)	
9.	English	/s/ (by involving the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge)	Almost meets the front upper teeth in /س/ means alveolar ridge
	Arabic	/س/ (the tip of the tongue almost meets the front upper teeth)	
10.	English	/z/ by involving the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge	Both sound are principally produced from the tip of the tongue and alveolar ridge.
	Arabic	/ز/	

In English, the classification of place of articulation is based on what organ a sound is produced as in Arabic as well. Yet, the names of the classification of each are different. Principally, there are similarities of articulation between the two languages, but the description literally used to explain each category is different. For example: sound [b] in English is produced by bringing the lower lip and the upper lip. Sound [ ɸ ] /b/ in Arabic is produced by involving two lips. By involving two lips in Arabic means involving the lower lip and the upper lip in English. Further, the writer presents what sounds are principally similar.

The classification of consonant sounds between English and Arabic is different. The differences lie on the way of grouping the consonant sounds into what group they belong to. In English, the classifications of sound are more specific, while in Arabic is vice versa. It can be seen from bilabials and labiodentals in English and Assyafatan in Arabic. Bilabials are purely produced from two lips while labiodentals are produced by combining lower lip and upper teeth. Therefore, the classification among sound [b] with [m] and [f] are differentiated; [b] and [m] belong to labiodentals and [f] belongs to labiodentals. In the mean-



time, in Arabic, every sound produced from lips is grouped into Assyafatan because Assyafatan means lip. Meanwhile, bilabials mean all lips and labiodentals stand bilabial and dentals meaning lip and teeth.

When [n] meets and [n] still become [n]. Meanwhile, when [n] meets [k] becomes [ŋ], and when [n] meets [ ] becomes [nj] or they are called as half assimilation. In the meantime, when [n] meets [m], [n], [l], [w], and [r], sound [n] assimilates purely into those sounds or called as total assimilation. In Arabic, sound [ب], [ت], [د], [ك], [ج], [ف], [ث], [ذ], [س], [ز], [ش], [م], and [ل] are half assimilation, while [م], [ل], [و], and [ر] are total assimilation. The result shows that the students of Mu'allimat program belonging to *khalaqoh tahsinul qur'an* don't always pronounce English regressive assimilation [n] cor-

rectly, and the students of Mu'allimat program not belonging to *khalaqoh tahsinul qur'an* don't always pronounce English regressive assimilation [n] incorrectly. The Implications in the Learning of English Phonology

In this sense, the problem is why do the students who have good 'tahsin' background aren't always good at articulating English sounds, while the process of articulating [n] in phrases in both English and Arabic in 'tahsin' sounds are similar. Hence, the students who have good 'tahsin' background should articulate better than those who don't have good 'tahsin' background or don't have the background at all. Those statements can be seen from the following table.

### 3.2 The Results of Recording by the Students of Mu'allimat Program to the Text containing English Regressive Assimilation [n]

**Tabel 2 The Phonemic Transcriptions of Students' Pronunciations**

Phrases	The Phonemic Transcriptions of Students' Pronunciations			
	Sample I KK (KG)	Sample II FAN (KG)	Sample III RKK (NKG)	Sample IV NO (NKG)
When Report	/wenripɔt/	/wenrɪpɔ(r)t/	/wenrɪpɔt/	/werɪpɔ(r)t/
London Zoo	/lʌndən zu:/	/lɒndənzɜ:/	/lɒndənzɜ:/	/lʌndənzɜ:/
Been Spotted	/bi:nspɔt/	/bɪnspɔtɪd/	/bɪnspɔtəd/	/bɪnspɔtət/
Taken Seriously	/tekənsɪrɪʊsli/	/tækənsɪrɪʊsli/	/tekənsɪrɪʊsli/	/tekənsɪrɪʊsli/
Given By	/gɪfəmbaɪ/	/gɪfəmbaɪ/	/gɪfəmbaɪ/	/gɪfəmbaɪ/
Seen the Puma	/si:nðəpuma/	/sɪnðəpuma/	/sɪnðəpuma/	/si:nðəpuma/
Been Silent	/bɪnsaɪlən/	/bɪnsaɪlən/	/bɪnsaɪlən/	/bɪnsaɪlən/
One Night	/wʌnʌnk/	/wʌnʌnk/	/wʌnʌnt/	/wʌnʌnt/
Thirteen Times	/tɜrtɪntʌm/	/tɜrtɪntʌms/	/tɜrtɪntʌms/	/tɜrtɪntʌms/
In Surprise	/ɪnsəprʌɪs/	/ɪnsəprʌɪs/	/ɪnsəprʌɪs/	/ɪnsəprʌɪs/
Can Do	/kəndu/	/kəndu/	/kəndu/	/kəndu/
Than Nothing	/ðənɪŋ/	/ðənɪŋ/	/ðənʌtɪŋ/	/ðənɪŋ/
Often Three	/ɔfðəntri:/	/ɔfəntri:/	/ɔfəntɪri:/	/ɔfənðe(r)/

\*KG : Khalaqoh Group (the students with good background at *tahsin*)

NKG: Non-Khalaqoh Group (the students without good background at *tahsin*)



### 3.3 The Correct Articulation of the Data Based on the IPA Symbols

The result of the recording shows that the students' pronunciation in English regressive assimilation [n] is various one another. Some of them have pronounced correctly, and the others have not pronounced well by both the students who belong and do not belong to *khalaqoh*.

In this case, it can be suggested that there should be a new language learning model in Islamic schools, since there usually 'tahsin' subject in their curriculum, there should be hold English phonetic symbols and articulation learning or their students should be taught English phonetic symbols and articulation and 'tahsin' in order that they will be balance in mastering both languages, both good at 'tahsin' and English sounds articulation at once or at least they can minimalize error articulations done by the students.

**Tabel 3 The Correct Articulation of the Data Based on the IPA Symbols**

### 4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, this study can be concluded that the alphabets of English and Arabic consist of consonants, vowels, and diphthongs although there are no such terminologies as those sound classifications in Arabic.

Meanwhile, English and Arabic have similarities and differences in the term of consonant sounds. The similar consonants are: [b] and [ب], [t] and [ت], [d] and [د], [k] and [ك], [dʒ] and [ج], [f] and [ف], [θ] and [ث], [ð] and [ذ], [s] and [س], [z] and [ز], [h] and [ه], [m] and [م], [n] and [ن], [l] and [ل], [r] and [ر], [j] and [ي], and [w] and [و]. While the different sounds are: [p], [g], [tʃ], [v], [ʃ], [ŋ] in English and [خ], [ح], [ص], [ض], [ط], [ظ], [ع], [غ], and [ق]. The English consonant articulations create regressive assimilation when an English word is preceded with sound [n]. It also occurs in those of Arabic with sound "ن". This condition should help the students with "tahsin" background apply their Arabic sound knowledge in articulating its similarities in English. However, those similarities don't always bring the solution for having good articulation in English, especially in the case of regressive assimilation sound [n].

Thus, it can be finally concluded that the students of Mu'allimat program belonging to *khalaqoh tahsinul qur'an* don't always pronounce English regressive assimilation [n] correctly, and the students of Mu'allimat program not belonging to *khalaqoh tahsinul qur'an* don't always pronounce English regressive assimilation [n] incorrectly.

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