

## AN ANALYSIS OF INTONATION PATTERN IN THE PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER'S TALKS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the intonation pattern errors occurring in pre-service English teachers' talks and investigated the causes of the errors. This research used three instruments to gain the data: documentation, observation and interview. Then, the collected data were analyzed using Roach, Wells Haycraft theories and PRAAT software analysis. The participants of this study were 8th semester students in English Language Education Study Program at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta. Three recordings of pre-service English teachers' talks were transcribed by unitizing schemes, sampling plans, recording/coding, reducing data, abductively inferring contextual phenomena, and narrating the result information of the data collected. The results showed that two kinds of intonation patterns occurred in pre-service English teachers, falling and rising. The speakers' dominant error was final rising in WH-question sentence type. The errors were caused by the physical impediment, inability in manipulating the pitch voice, and inability to keep the level tone stable. In addition, it was also due to the pre-service English teachers L1 mother tongue. This study gave information of pre-service English teachers' ability, obstacle, and the causes of errors in producing intonation tone. It can be a reference for pre-service English teachers to look for pre-service teachers' ability in mastering pronunciation especially intonation.*

*Keywords: Intonation Pattern, Pre-service Teacher, Teacher Talk*

### INTRODUCTION

Verbal communication is one of the important skills that play a significant role in human life because it contains a complicated system of words that can share meaning to the interlocutors (Daud, Ras, Novitri, & Audia 2019). Similarly, Ahmad (2017) informs that mastering verbal production in English, the speakers need to know better the speaking competencies. One of those competencies is mastering specific features in supra-segmental to support the speaker's speech clarity (Al-awad & Ahmed, 2019). Intonation as the part of suprasegmental takes a high-priority part on speaking skills (Purba & Herman, 2020). It is because the intonation takes one of the main parts in the oral communication component in phonology that carries the speaker's expression, idea, and attitude toward the receiver (Alsmadi, Yunus, & Almadani, 2020). More realistic, intonation includes the pronunciation part that relates to the goal of communication which is intelligibility (Lane, 2010). Intelligibility aids the listener in recognizing the speaker's words, phrases, and utterances audibly. It means through the help of intonation, the hearer can grasp the kind of speakers' intended meaning such as pleasure, anger, surprise, and sadness by realizing the speaker's tone of utterance. Intonation also becomes one of the oral communication aspects that assists the listener to identify the speaker's sociolinguistic characteristics such as age, gender, and status through signal information (Al-awad & Ahmed, 2019). Thus, intonation can be said as one of the fundamental properties of spoken language, together with the rhythm and stress in the supra-segmental component of pronunciation (Eghlidi, 2016).

However, intonation takes a great part in conveying the speaker's meaning to the listener. In verbal communication, to study and comprehend intonation briefly is not an easy matter, rather it is a complicated nature to review than understandable (Jeong, 2018). Particularly for non-native English like Foreign Language learners who have difficulties applying correct intonation in speaking English

(Purba & Herman, 2020). One of the learner problems in mastering intonation is caused by the existence of intonation nature such as the movement of voice pitch (falling-rising), level intonation, and voice range in the speakers' speech (Haycraft, 1971). For example, "That's a cat" can be conveyed into several tones to indicate various meanings. It can be indicated as a disbelief or confirmation statement when the speaker uses a falling-rising tone (Fasold & Jeff, 2014). Yet, it would lead to misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer when the intonation does not pronounce evidently.

Several pieces of research in analyzing intonation had been done by Munif and Nursyamsu (2013), Purnami (2017), and Widagsa (2020). The researchers had a common study in examining the English intonation pattern in EFL learners. However, it showed different results at the end of the investigation. For example, Purnami (2017) found out that neutral tonality was more dominant in EFL learners and followed with rise-fall intonation. Meanwhile, Munif and Nursyamsu (2013) confirmed that the non-final pattern in incomplete sentences is the most intonation pattern that appeared in the EFL learner. Yet, Widagsa (2020) figured out that EFL learners produce the wrong pitch in uttering the declarative sentence and it becomes an interrogative sentence.

The foregoing relevant studies on intonation have given many ideas to discuss for further research. Since the research nearly focused on studying intonation production error. So that, the current study followed the late track by addressing the error production of pre-service English teacher intonation as a role model candidate in the future, which is an urgent problem in the teaching-learning output field in the classroom for the student. The wrong intonation production in teacher verbal communication can influence the student's language acquisition (Kurniawan, Suganda, & Zuraida, 2020).

The motive behind this research concerned the weak performance possibility of pre-service language English teachers in producing the proper intonation as the result of the experience in observing the pre-service English teachers' verbal production in their microteaching class at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta with English Language Education study program. The other cases of this research are due to the pre-service English teacher as the part of non native English speaker hold a huge impact on the teaching-learning process and expected to have a good speaking skills which include intonation, and approximate standard native English degree as the reference in the class (Arikan & Yilmaz, 2019).

Furthermore, it is an urgent case for pre-service English teachers to have excellent intonation ability. Since it is also one of the inputs of language learning and the case to support the learner learning success through the teacher and student communication language used in the classroom (Pahlevi & Ridwan, 2019). Moreover, communicating using an excellent intonation linked with the gentle ascent, accuracy of correct grammar, voice quality, and word choice would be noticed more than communicating using fewer pronunciation elements (Lane, 2010). Equivalently, a pre-service English teacher who has mastered in speaking English would be more recognized by the student, followed with the other English teaching-learning competencies such as writing, reading, and listening. Thus, this research is conducted to examine the intonation pattern errors occurring in pre-service English teachers' talks and investigate the causes of the errors happened.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The main aim of this particular work is to provide an overview of the error intonation pattern made in pre-service English teachers' talk production, particularly the occurrences of intonation

patterns used in pre-service English teachers' sentence types production. This study used a content analysis approach to figure out the result. Content analysis is a methodology used to identify data such as pictures, textbooks, speeches, television programs, or musical compositions (Ary et. al, 2014:488). Equally, Krippendorff (2004) clarified that content analysis is also the research technique to identify data as texts, sounds, or pictures to obtain the hidden information conveyed to people. Yet, it is supported also by Luo (2019) that content analysis can be implemented to identify patterns in recorded communication. Therefore, applying content analysis in this study is an appropriate case to support in finding the errors of intonation patterns in pre-service English teachers' speech.

The three students of the 8th semester majoring in the English Language Education study program from a private university in Yogyakarta were randomly selected to represent the study sample. The documentation used in collecting the data were video recorders and speech transcriptions. These instruments were utilized to observe the issue. Then, in analyzing the form of pitch errors created by participants, it used an acoustic program software called PRAAT. The data collection of this research adopts six procedures of Krippendorff (2004:83-85) theory as followed: 1) unitizing schemes or analyze the phenomenon interest to analyze; 2) sampling plans, limiting the observation or managing the units of interest; 3) recording/coding, analyzing the information representation; 4) reducing data to manageable representations, methods for summarizing or simplifying data; 5) abductively inferring contextual phenomena, bridge the gap between an unobserved phenomenon in the context by implementing analytical construct; 6) narrating all the result information by answering the research question. The data analysis of this work was used qualitatively to give a brief description form by using observation and interview. Observation is used to identify the pre-service English teachers' error intonation in the video recorder. The interview was applied to support in finding the causes of the errors. In addition, it is supported with small quantification to count the number of errors occurring in pre-service English teachers' talk. The data analysis is checked also by the experts to validate and review its content to see if it did measure what was supposed to be measured or not (Ary et. al., 2014).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting and discussing the result of the data collected, it should be noted that each of the answered questions has been drawn with the illustration from PRAAT software to prove the speaker's tone error and support the data description in writing. Then, the data from interviewees were assembled to prop up on discovering the cause of pitch error made by the pre-service English teacher.

### **Errors of intonation pattern occurred in the pre-service English teachers' talks**

Table 1 showed that there were two (2) types of intonation pattern error in pre-service English teacher verbal production. They are rising tone (yes-no question, comprehension check) and falling tone (command, statement with definitive fall, interjection/exclamation, and WH-question). In addition, falling nuclear tone particularly WH-question came out to be the most frequent pattern error in their fluency. Lastly, it should be noticed that interjection and greeting could be uttered both falling or rising. Yet, in rising it is known as an encouragement, routine acknowledgment, or continuing speaking (Wells, 2006).

Table 1. Total of the errors intonation pattern made

Participants	Sentences Types	Tone	Number of Errors	Total Number of the Errors
RP	- Command	Falling	1	5
	- WH question	Falling	2	
	- Yes/no question	Rising	1	
	- Statement	Falling	0	
	- Interjection/exclamation	Falling	1	
	- Comprehension check	Rising	1	
BS	- Command	Falling	0	8
	- WH question	Falling	4	
	- Yes/no question	Rising	2	
	- Statement	Falling	1	
	- Interjection/exclamation	Falling	1	
	- Comprehension check	Rising	0	
AP	- Command	Falling	1	2
	- WH question	Falling	0	
	- Yes/no question	Rising	0	
	- Statement	Falling	0	
	- Interjection/exclamation	Falling	1	
	- Comprehension check	Rising	0	

### Participant RP

In the participant RP's talk, it found that there were 5 items of the intonation pattern error produced from a total of 26 sentences. As represented previously in fig.1 which are 2 types consisting of rising tone (yes-no question, comprehension check), and 3 types of falling tone (command, WH-question, exclamation). Here is an instance of the result in investigating the form of participant RP's pitches by using PRAAT software.

Fig. 1. Error of intonation pattern in comprehension check type

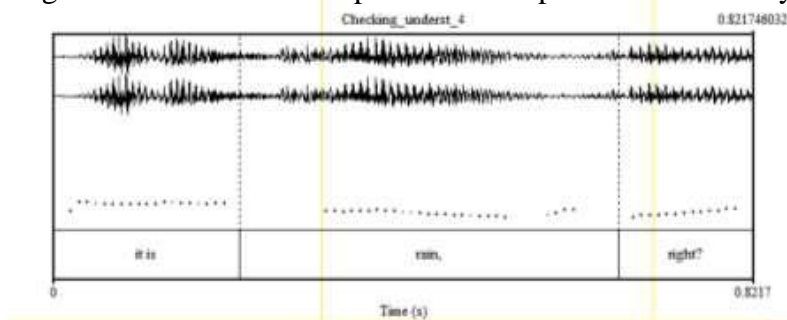


Fig. 1 displayed one of the error intonation patterns created by the speaker RP. It showed the model tone of comprehension check or checking understanding “It is rain, right?”. This kind of sentence usually has the intention to ask for confirmation or clarification from the hearer. Nonetheless, as presented based on the illustration in fig. 1 the speaker RP's contour tone did not match with the intonation pattern rule. It is marked that at the end of the statement of “it is rain,” the word “right?” did not articulate in rising nuclear intonation (Lane, 2010). Meanwhile, the speaker RP conveyed the information to the hearer almost in a monotone, flat, or level tone. It could be assumed that the speaker might be in an uninteresting feeling when he uttered it (Roach, 2009). Thus, it certainly stated the error of the intonation pattern.

### Participant BS

In participant BS's talk, there were 37 of the intonation pattern sentences found. It appeared that 2 types of intonation pattern with 8 items types of sentences were voiced in wrong pitch nuclear e.g. falling tone (WH question, interjection/exclamation, and statement), and rising tone (yes/no questions).

Fig. 2. Error of intonation pattern in yes/no questions type

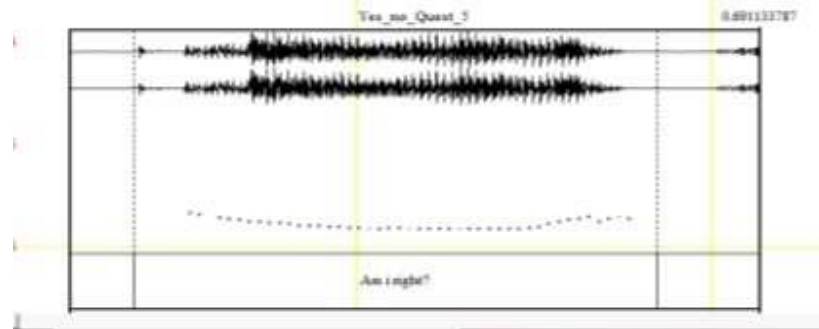


Fig.2 presenting an example of the errors of intonation pattern created by speaker B in the yes/no question type. Yes/no question sentences have some purpose based on the use, for example like to ask something in the case or not. The default in pronouncing this sort of sentence is using rising pitch (Wells, 2006). However, the tone-unit of “am I right?” did not utter correctly, rather fig.2 showed the intonation contour in a level tone. As mentioned previously, the level tone is used to indicate tedious or repetitive feelings (Roach, 2009). Therefore, it is also indicated as the wrong intonation pattern.

### Participant AP

As represented previously on table 1. In the speaker's AP speech, there were 2 sentence types in total of the errors made of intonation patterns from 12 sentence types. Especially, in falling nuclear tone with the classification of sentence types as commands, and interjection/exclamation.

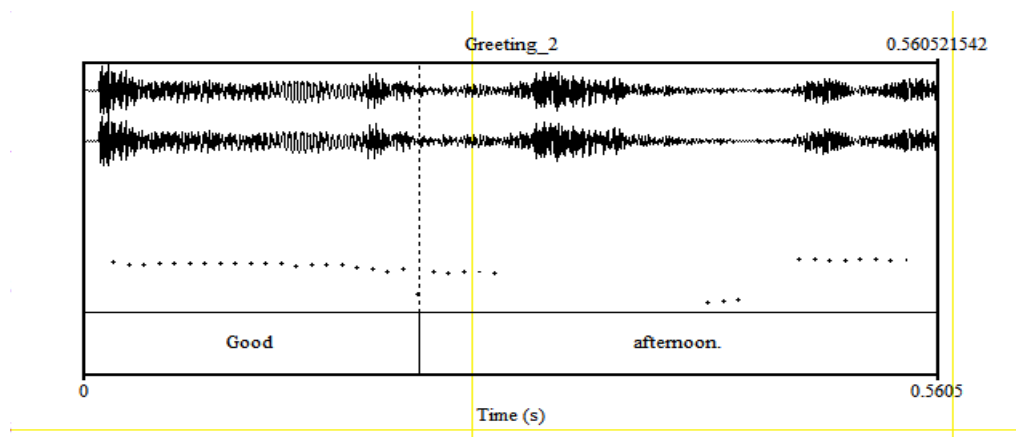


Fig.3. Error of intonation pattern in interjection type

Fig.3 illustrated the sample of errors that speaker C made in her talk. The type of sentence drawn above was interjection, “good afternoon”. This type of sentence is uttered in an exclamatory or definitive fall tone. Even so, it can be said with an encouraging rise in meaning to invite other people to speak or continue speaking (Wells, 2006). Yet, the pitch drew in fig. 3 did not show both a

falling or rising tone, rather it displayed a monotone pitch. It indicated breaking the intonation pattern rule and the intended meaning changed to be an uninteresting feeling (Roach, 2009).

### Causes of error intonation pattern arising in the pre-service English teachers' talk

There were three participants interviewed to discover the causes of errors in intonation patterns. Each of them was given six-item questions which consisted of the intonation difficulty aspect by using Haycraft's (1971) source of intonation error.

Table. 2 Haycraft (1971) source of intonation errors

Theme	Code
Wide voice range	- Shyness - Suspiciousness
Falling tone	- Narrow voice range
Final rising tone	- Unable to manipulate the voice into an extra high pitch
Sentence with more stresses	- Inability in making actual fall - Uncertainty about stress
Level tone	- Concern with the stressed syllables rather the last one - Inability to keep level tone
Pitch in the first syllable	- Ability in using wide range voice

After evaluating the collected data of the interviewees, it resulted that the errors of intonation pattern were revealed due to; 1.) the physical impediment of the speaker e.g. shyness, nervousness, and doubt which these factors were affecting the pre-service English teacher's voice range on producing sound. Thus, it brought out the pitch of the voice being faltered. In the same way, the use of a narrower pitch range could contribute to the "flat" intonation (Lane, 2010). As the participant BS stated: "*When I say something directly without preparation, it makes me nervous and caused the speed of my voice unstructured and stutter*" (BS, interviewed, 2021); 2) inability in manipulating the voice into an extra high and low tone; and 3.) unable to keep the level tone. As the interviewee, AP said: "*...the nervousness caused me to lower my voice and also it is due to the uncertainty of the words that I say*" (AP, interviewed, 2021). From the AP statement, it indicates that the physical impediment can affect the other factor also in making the tone unstable as an inability to keep the level tone into extra rise or actual fall. As the result, the hearer cannot recognize the message transferring by the speaker. Then, caused the receiver on asking for a repetition of what the speaker has been said.

For further discussion, all of the participants agreed and were conscious of their lack of ability in understanding the intonation of their speaking skills. As uttered in one of the interviewees' interview: "*...I was aware of the intonation existence in spoken, but due to the lack of practice and the uncertainty on using falling-rising. It often leads me to create errors in my speech*" (BS, Interviewed, 2021).

In addition, the participants believed that the cause of errors in their intonation pattern was not only triggered by the previous factor mentioned. But also, the existence of the L1 mother tongue in each of the participant's verbal articulations is called the inter-lingual factor (James, 2013). As followed by the participants named RP and BS: "*...the mother tongue of our L1 also takes part in the way we pronounce words in English*". It indicates that both of them unconsciously admitted to the difficulties in mastering the target language by being non-native who did not use English as their L1. In fact, they have already learned pronunciation fluency material such as vowel, consonant, rhythm, stress, intonation, and fluent in accenting the target language. It seems that non-natives still would keep on facing great obstacles in obtaining language acquisition (Al-awad & Ahmed, 2019).

In the same way, the study from Sukarni et. al (2020) stated that the Indonesian produce the errors pattern of intonation was caused by the habit of the use of flat stress and intonation in their daily conversation, also similar to the use of rising pitch both in yes/no and informative questions. This case was followed also by Eghlidi (2016), yet he clarified that the speaker error is caused by a generalization of their native language patterns while speaking the target language. In other terms, it can be implied that the speakers blend their first language with the target language then resulting in an error in their output learning. However, the errors cannot be neglected, there must be resolution made to anticipate the impact in avoiding misunderstanding and misconception between speaker and the hearer. As supported by Ahmad (2018) works in figuring out the new strategy on teaching pronunciation, especially suprasegmental features. The finding revealed the technique and activity in teaching pronunciation with the help of pronunciation software. Concerning the mastering verbal production difficulty, the finding from the interview can be concluded that pre-service English teachers thought of fluency in English, particularly intonation is not a simple matter. It needs a lot of practice and interaction with the expert or native ones to get a better understanding of the wrong and correction. Secondly, the factors causing errors that occurred were mostly the inability of switching or manipulating the pitch easily in producing the tone to the target language and the effect of the first language mother tongue of the speakers'. Therefore, it brings out the mispronunciation in pre-service English teacher's talk.

## CONCLUSION

The result of the current work found out that the pre-service English language teachers still made errors in applying the intonation in their talk particularly in teaching performance. Moreover, the error tone that they made mostly became a "flat" tone. Some of the sentence types were pronounced in monotonous melody without the use of correct intonation contour as yes/no question and comprehension check uttered in a final rising tone, and interjection both falling or rising. The errors were caused by the physical impediment of the speaker such as nervousness, doubt, inability to manipulate the pitch voice, inability to keep the level tone stably, and the effect of L1 mother tongue. Even so, the pre-service English teachers showed that they were aware of the errors made and some of them tried to correct it by themselves. This work gives information of the pre-service teachers' talk ability in using intonation, the obstacle and the causes of errors in producing intonation tone which later on, this finding can be a reference for educators and pre-service English teachers to look for techniques or even materials development to improve pre-service teachers' ability in mastering pronunciation especially intonation.

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