



Attitudes toward English phonetics learning: a survey on Indonesian EFL learners

Sri Ayu Istiqomah ^{1*}, Alies Poetri Lintang Sari ², Widya Caterine Perdhani ³

^{1,2,3} English Language Education Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

* Email: srayui23@gmail.com (corresponding author)

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Abstract

Indonesian EFL learners face challenges in comprehending English phonemes as it becomes one of the significant predictors of English literacy. Hence, the English Phonetics subject is considered one of the most difficult ones, making the teaching and learning process less effective. Addressing Indonesian EFL learners' attitudes toward English phonetics teaching is significant to improve phonetics teaching, yet, research on this has not received much attention. This present study was conducted to explore EFL learners' attitudes toward English phonetic learning. A quantitative approach with survey design was employed involving 112 Indonesian EFL students. The researchers identified students' attitudes using an adapted questionnaire from Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2015). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was utilized to analyze the data. The results indicate that Indonesian EFL students perform positive attitudes toward English phonetic learning, although they confess that phonetics is challenging. It implies that phonetics learning is potential and promising to support their English fluency; hence, lecturers need to make phonetics Learning more enjoyable, easier and participating in drawing the students' full engagement by considering their preferences and attitude toward phonetics learning.

Keywords: EFL learners; English phonetics; phonetics teaching and learning; student attitudes

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Introduction

English as a foreign language has been an essential subject taught in formal education. To acquire English, it is assumed to learn better from the native English speakers. In the real world of English language teaching, the native English model was extensively considered the only goal students have to attain (Fang, 2016). It was also proven by using traditional British and American English in most non-native English countries as the standard to judge the success of English language teaching (Hamid, 2014; Phusit & Suksiripakonchai, 2018). Moreover, pronunciation variety, such as accents, is more comprehensible to communicate internationally with native English speakers (Suebwongsuawan & Nomnian, 2020). It means that the more fluent we speak in English, the more successful interaction can be made, more specifically with native English speakers. In the context of EFL learning, Rokhman et al. (2020) have explored the significant correlation between English phoneme identification skills to word recognition skills; it leads to the assumption that understanding English phoneme is crucial to help ELF learners process English words. Specifically, in the Indonesian context, Adeline (2020) found out that Indonesian EFL learners face challenges in pronouncing English /g/ sounds, specifically /g/ sound before the /m/ sound in the same syllable and pronouncing the /gh/ sound. Therefore, it is really important to learn how to differentiate and articulate the correct English phoneme to help learners process English words adequately to reduce the risk of misunderstanding. To overcome it, phonetics becomes the answer to it.

Phonetics is a branch of the study of speech sounds of language. Phonetics which is referred to as speech sounds feature study (Yule, 2010, p. 26) has been widely taught in the English Department of formal education institutions. Phonetics is often taught along with phonology which tends to discuss language sound patterns of certain languages (Hayes, 2011). Students would learn not only the speaking ability of the language but also the concept of why they should speak the word in certain sounds making organs in learning a language.

Also, there is a term called phonetics awareness. Phonetics awareness can be assumed as a term to spot, analyze, and produce sounds of letters/words. Phonetics awareness is important to be learned since it represents EFL students' skill to recognize the point and manner of articulation of English consonants and also recognize tongue position, tongue height, lip rounding, diphthongs, and triphthongs of English vowels in English words (Hismanoglu, 2012). It can help students to speak the English language properly. Phonetics awareness is often correlated with phonemic awareness. To encourage students to produce correct pronunciation of words, phonemic awareness is required to be mastered by students. According to Alhumsi and Affendi (2016), phonemic awareness indicates a competency in which phonemes in spoken words can be acquainted, spotted, and employed by students. Rokhman et al. (2020) mentioned in their study that phonemic awareness and letter representation lead to a speech and writing production capability of words. They also mentioned that it could also assist students to comprehend words better. Once they understand particular words, it is believed that they would have a preferable pronunciation skill and could avert any mispronunciation since they recognize the words along with their phoneme.

Several experts suggested that phonetics helps learners to have better speech and pronounce words accurately. By learning both phonetics and phonology, students may acquire a full comprehension of the function of English speech sounds (Roach, 1991). It also helps learners have segmental and suprasegmental knowledge of a language (Lintunen & Mäkilähde, 2015). Then, by teaching phonetics, students will have a deeper comprehension of speech sounds production in human speech organs and build up their phonetics coding ability. Phonetics coding ability relates to the ability to differentiate sounds more precisely and can emulate the sounds better (Sahatsathatsana, 2017). It would help students to understand and be comprehended by their interlocutors.

Nevertheless, phonetics is also considered challenging and difficult for students. Students often mispronounce English words. They assumed that it was due to the lack of teachers' awareness of proper pronunciation and students' ignorance of the necessary need for phonetics functions in learning the language (Alam & Uddin, 2019). Widya and Agustiana (2020) argued that English students have been facing a challenge of segmental features in phonetics and phonological varieties of languages which are vowel sounds. They wrongly utter vowel sounds frequently. According to Priya and NS (2020), several letters that do not pronounce in a word may have more sounds.

There are also identical sounds that turn out to be different letters. These can cause perplexity among EFL students in particular due to intricacy that makes English utterance challenging. Moreover, (Lintunen and Mäkilähde, 2015) also stated that students were supposed to study the way to transcribe particular words using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) during the learning even though there were no pronunciation exercises based on the curriculum.

Since phonetics is considered a challenging subject, it can cause students to experience difficulties in English's learning process. However, several aspects are considered to influence the learners' learning process, such as attitudes, anxiety, motivation, aptitude, intelligence, age, personalities, and learning achievement (Hashwani, 2008; Hasan & Fatimah, 2014). Among these aspects, attitude is believed to be the fundamental aspect in language learning. Previous studies on students' attitudes towards English have shown that most students tend to show high positive attitudes towards American or British English (Phusit & Suksiripakonchai, 2018). Their positive attitudes will make them engage in the learning process and contribute to successful learning.

Attitudes have become a focus of research types in the EFL learning context as it is considered one of the essential elements in language learning (Sholihah & Suharti, 2015). Attitude gives information on how people think, feel, and behave, which may predict the students' performance and help teachers map the students' habits in the learning process (Mensah et al., 2013). Morganna et al. (2020) have mentioned the three essential components of attitudes which tell human's cognitive (the way human think), behavior (the way of human's act), and affective (the feeling of a human). Previous studies have elaborated that attitude plays a significant role in the process of learning. Students who have a negative attitude toward learning tend to be more bored and cannot enjoy the learning process resulting from decreased learning motivation and engagement (Zulfikar et al., 2019). Whereas, the enjoyment of learning will yield optimal attainment of cognitive competencies that can be achieved if only the students perceive a positive attitude toward the learning process (Abidin et al., 2012). Thus, a positive attitude toward language learning is essential to encourage students' motivation and enjoyment of learning to help them engage in the learning process.

Few research types have been discussing the attitude of Indonesian EFL learners toward phonetics learning; instead, some researchers reported that Indonesian EFL learners are struggling toward English Pronunciation (Adeline, 2020; Saputra et al., 2020; Silalahi, 2017). As the basic studies of English

Pronunciation, the study of English phonetics should be significantly addressed. A study involving 133 Finland EFL learners reported that they have a positive attitude toward phonetics teaching that addresses the accent differences as the most preferred themes in suprasegmental level and phonetics transcription is the most preferred theme in segmental level (Lintunen & Mäkilähde, 2015). Yet, less research has been found involving Indonesian EFL learners' attitudes toward phonetics teaching. One of the less is conducted by involving 103 Indonesian EFL learners reported that they performed a positive attitude toward English phonetics teaching yet did not think that they need it for their future life. Additionally, research done by Pei and Qin (2015) reported that 70% of 64 participants thought that English phonetics is important and significant to help them pronounce better. The aforementioned discussion has implied that the study of English learners toward English phonetics is mostly positives, yet, less exploration on Indonesian EFL learners and English phonetics learning in Indonesia.

The aforementioned research has postulated the significance of the EFL learners' attitude toward English phonetics, yet, most of the research does not address Indonesian EFL learners specifically. Indonesian EFL learners share different English Phonemics competencies to other Asian English learners. Their voice to this matter is significant to address the specific needs and expectations toward phonetics teaching and learning.

In connection with the all explanation above, the result of the study might be used and benefited for further English phonetics teaching and learning fields, specifically in the Indonesian context. The research question is as follows, "What are the attitudes of EFL Indonesian students towards their English phonetics learning?"

Method

Research design

The objective of the present study was to investigate learners' attitudes toward learning English phonetics. A survey design with quantitative data analysis was operated to address the research question. Survey design is a branch of quantitative approach that examines a population sample to obtain the numeric explanation on terms such as attitudes, assumptions, or trends of the population (Creswell, 2014). According to Kumar (2018), one of the survey study's objectives is to explain what is generally associated with the issue or

problem under study. This research design may provide such information regarding any situation, problems, and other information in society.

Participants

The sample of the participants was collected with the purposive sampling method. The criteria of participant selection are (1) the participants should be Indonesian EFL/ESL learners and (2) the participants have enrolled in English phonetics, so they have experience in studying English phonetics. Therefore, this research invited 112 pre-service English teachers who had enrolled in English phonetics course. The demographics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of the research participants

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Total |
|---|-------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| Academic year | Second-year | 100 | 98.2 | 112 |
| | Third-year | 12 | 10.7 | |
| Gender | Male | 26 | 23.3 | 112 |
| | Female | 86 | 76.8 | |
| Have experienced English phonetics learning | Yes | 112 | 100 | 112 |
| | No | - | - | |

Research instrument

The instrument used was adapted from Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2015). The questionnaire was a five-step Likert-scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) with 14 statements to measure students' attitudes. It consists of statements that measure students' attitudes toward the importance of English phonetics, their perspective on the difficulties of English phonetics, and accent variation preferences. The questionnaire also asked whether their confidence in their pronunciation abilities had increased, how they had learned English phonetics, and how they would use them in the future. Table 2 describes the detailed content of the questionnaire.

Reliability and validity

A total of 30 participants were invited to a try-out to ensure the instrument's reliability and validity. The validity and reliability tests were done by using the SPSS program. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to measure the validity of the questionnaire. From 19 statements, five statements are considered invalid. Therefore, the researchers decided to delete those

Table 2. Details of the final statements used in the questionnaire

| No | Statement |
|----|---|
| 1 | Phonetics has made me aware of English Sound System |
| 2 | I would like to hear about many varieties of English during Phonetics Class |
| 3 | Phonetics teaching has helped me to improve my pronunciation |
| 4 | Phonetics is a challenging discipline |
| 5 | Phonetics will be important for my future career |
| 6 | Phonetics is difficult |
| 7 | Information on different manners and places of articulation has helped me to improve my pronunciation |
| 8 | Learning phonetics transcription has helped my pronunciation |
| 9 | Phonetics has too many details to remember |
| 10 | I can list the consonant sounds of English |
| 11 | I can list the vowel sounds of English |
| 12 | Learning phonetics has made me more confident about my pronunciation |
| 13 | Phonetics is important |
| 14 | I think it would be better to focus on larger segments of speech than phonemes when teaching phonetics. |

statements to obtain a valid questionnaire. After the statements were deleted, the validity test result showed Pearson correlation values that were higher than the R-table value (0.306). It means that the 14 statements in the questionnaire left were valid and can be said as a valid instrument. The next test was reliability. Reliability score points of a questionnaire to Cronbach's Alpha must be higher than the R-table value to be considered as reliable. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability statistic result

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of items |
|------------------|------------|
| .789 | 19 |

Cronbach's Alpha value was higher than the T-table value ($0.789 > 0.306$). Then, it was reliable. The questionnaire was ready to be utilized to gain the data collection.

Data collection

An online survey utilizing Google form was administered through social media. Afterward, the participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire by giving responses from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree (SD); 2 = disagree (D); 3 = somewhat agree (SwA); 4 = agree (A); 5 = strongly agree (SA)). Once the questionnaire was proven valid and reliable based on the test results of the

SPSS version 25 program, the questionnaire was distributed online to the targeted participants. After a few days, the questionnaire data were gathered. Then, the data were analyzed using the SPSS version 25 program.

Data analysis

The accumulated numbered data was classified into a data classification table to get distinct data. This step was implemented for the data from all participants. The example of classified data in the table is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The example of the classification table

| Name | Academic year | Gender | Statement 1 | Statement 14 | Total scores of attitudes |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--|
| Participant 1 | 2 nd /3 rd year | Male/Female | 1 to 5 | 1 to 5 | Accumulated score from statement 1 to statement 14 for participant 1 |
| Participant 2 | 2 nd /3 rd year | Male/Female | 1 to 5 | 1 to 5 | Accumulated score from statement 1 to statement 14 for participant 2 |
| Participant 3 | 2 nd /3 rd year | Male/Female | 1 to 5 | 1 to 5 | Accumulated score from statement 1 to statement 14 for participant 3 |

After the data were classified into a data classification as shown in Table 4, the data were analyzed. The data were analyzed using SPSS program version 25 to be evaluated and calculated statistically. To calculate the data, descriptive statistics were arranged to specify the frequency, mean, and median of the data. Then, the analyzed data can be interpreted to obtain clear findings.

In this procedure, the data which has been analyzed were interpreted to report the findings into sentences. This procedure contained the interpretation of the data: How the previous studies responded to the results in this study, and the theories from some of the previous studies and experts to strengthen the data. Researchers described these steps to elaborate the overall data interpretation and analysis in detail and depth explanation. These steps have been presented in the finding and discussion section for a more detailed explanation.

Findings

The results of the present study are presented in this section. Table 5 shows the frequency of all statements measuring students' attitudes toward English phonetics learning. The results of students' attitudes are shown in the central tendency measurement (mean and median) (see Table 5) and the chart of the frequency distribution (see Figure 1). The results were divided into four different parts: the perspective that English phonetics is challenging; the perspective that phonetics is significant; the topic of the preferences; and students' attitude toward their competency.

Table 5. The result of the questionnaire

| Statement | Likert scale (in per cent) | | | | | Total | Mean | Median |
|-----------|----------------------------|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|--------|
| | SA=5 | A=4 | SwA=3 | D=2 | SD=1 | | | |
| 1 | 49.1 | 37.5 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 100 | 4.26 | 4 |
| 2 | 32.1 | 53.6 | 3.9 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.11 | 4 |
| 3 | 48.2 | 38.4 | 8.0 | 3.6 | 1.8 | 100 | 4.28 | 4 |
| 4 | 39.3 | 44.6 | 8.9 | 4.5 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.14 | 4 |
| 5 | 44.6 | 36.6 | 13.4 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.18 | 4 |
| 6 | 40.2 | 33.0 | 16.1 | 8.0 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.01 | 4 |
| 7 | 38.4 | 40.2 | 15.2 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.09 | 4 |
| 8 | 41.1 | 38.4 | 13.4 | 4.5 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.11 | 4 |
| 9 | 45.5 | 35.7 | 10.7 | 5.4 | 2.7 | 100 | 4.16 | 4 |
| 10 | 17.0 | 34.8 | 33.9 | 10.7 | 3.6 | 100 | 3.52 | 4 |
| 11 | 22.3 | 35.7 | 32.1 | 7.1 | 2.7 | 100 | 3.68 | 4 |
| 12 | 31.3 | 34.8 | 28.6 | 3.6 | 1.8 | 100 | 3.91 | 4 |
| 13 | 23.2 | 40.2 | 27.7 | 8.0 | 0.9 | 100 | 3.78 | 4 |
| 14 | 13.4 | 48.2 | 28.6 | 7.1 | 2.7 | 100 | 3.64 | 4 |

The significance of phonetics

This part tells students' responses to the significance of phonetics. Although most of the participants approve that phonetics is challenging, they coincide that English phonetics is significant to support their future career (statement 5, M=4.18), improve their pronunciation (statement 3, M=4.28 and statement 8, M=4.11) but do not make them confident about their pronunciation (statement 12, M=3.91), make them aware of English sound system (statement 1, M=4.26) and most of them neutrally respond that phonetics is important (statement 13=3.64).

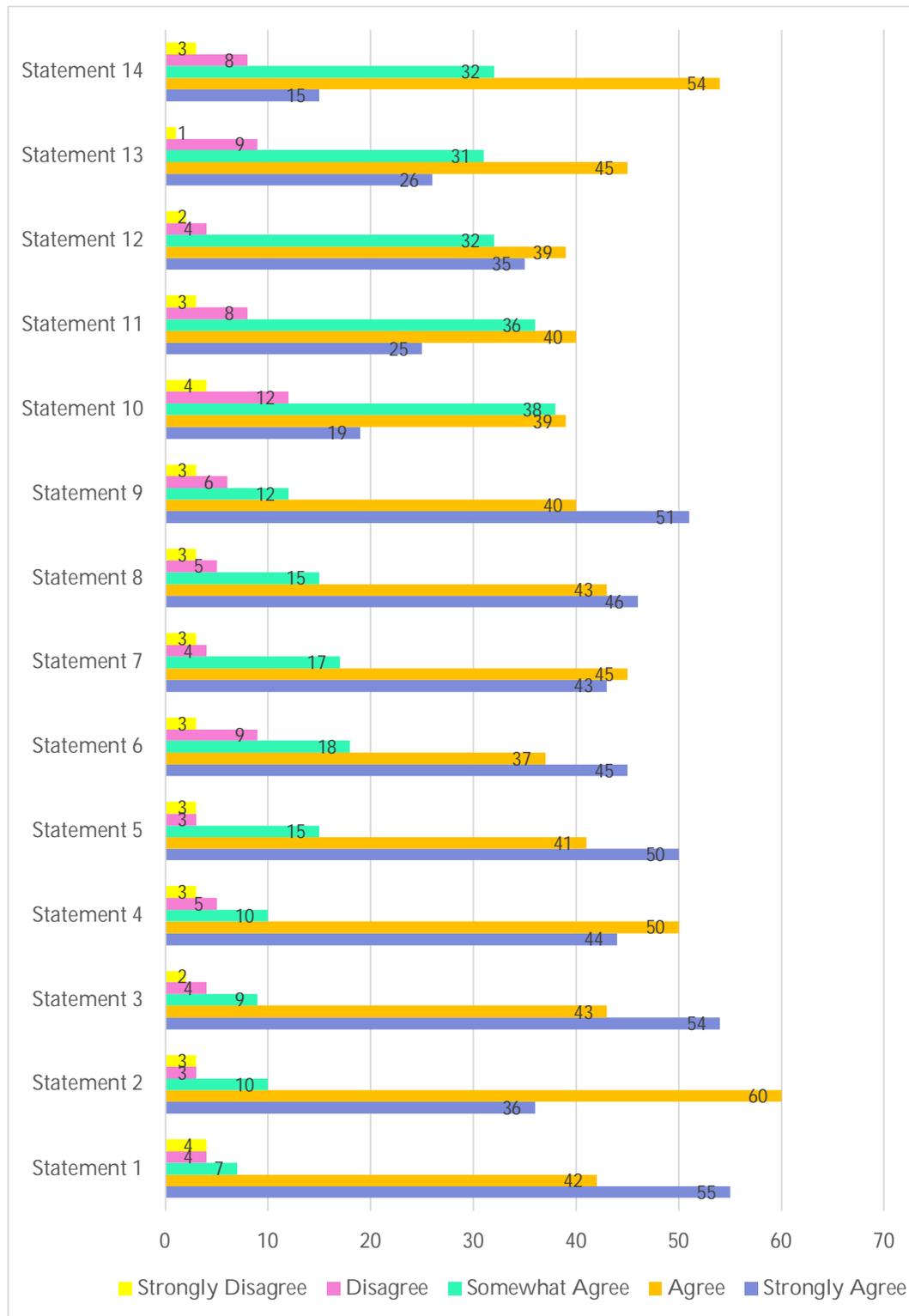


Figure 1. The chart of the frequency distribution

Statement 5 was chosen by 81.4% or 91 of the participants. On the contrary, students thought that phonetics is not quite important (only 63.4% or 58 of the participant chose this item) even though statement 5 asks quite a similar thing. It could be implied that phonetics is important for some students but not for the other ones. Statement 3 was chosen by 86.6% or 97 of the total participants, 79.5% for statement 8, and 66.1% for statement 12. It's proven that learning phonetics is not enough to increase their confidence in pronouncing words. However, it also helps them boost their awareness of the English sound system, which helps them differentiate English words (statement 1). This statement was chosen up to 86.6%, which makes it to be one of the most agreed statements by participants. In general, phonetics is still considered important since it assists students to improve their pronunciation and awareness of English sound.

The preferred topic of phonetics learning

This part tells students' response to their preferences topic of English phonetics learning. It showed that most of them are interested in learning accent varieties (statement 2, M=4.11), but most of them responded neutrally on the topic of larger segments (statement 14, M=3.64), yet, most of them agreed that segmental phonology such as consonant description (learning about different manners and place of articulation) has helped them improve their pronunciation (statement 7, M=4.09).

Accent varieties derived most of the students' attention as 85.7% of the participants agreed to have accent varieties in their English Phonetics Course. The second one was segmental phonology that was picked up by 78.8% of participants. It might be because it assists their pronunciation. The last chosen topic was topic on larger segments with 61.6% or 69 of participants. In short, preference topics are still interesting for students in learning English phonetics.

Students' attitude toward their competency

Although most of their response toward segmental phonology is positive (statement 7) but they do not think similar to their perception toward their competencies in segmental level as shown in statement 10 (M=3.52) and statement 11 (M=3.68) about their skill in listing English sounds (consonants and vowels). Both items received the lowest chosen items by participants. Yet, the number of participants who chose an agreed option was higher than those who disagreed. The number of students who disagreed with statement 10 (consonants) was 14.3%, but it's still quite much lower than those who agreed

(51.8% of the total participant). The same thing happened to statement 11. The number of participants who disagreed with statement 11 (vowels) was 9.8%, yet those who agreed were 58%. It's shown that there are still quite big differences in comparison between students' perception toward their competency on segmental phonology level. Only a small number of participants disagreed. It indicates that some students were still quite confident with their competency to segment and comprehend English Vowels and Consonants.

Discussion

The focus and scope of the current research were to "uncover" the attitudes of college students while they were learning English phonetics. According to the findings, most students tend to reflect positive responses toward phonetics learning which indicates their agreement.

Accent varieties have drawn a spotlight on the students' interest in learning English as 96% of them are an enthusiast in learning accent variation. This strong interest to varieties of English accents while in Phonetics class (statement 2, SA:60, A:36, 96% agreed to the statements), is quite different from Chinese EFL learners mostly perceived themselves as a learner rather than users since only 17.1% Chinese EFL learners are satisfied with their English Accent, and they did not appear overconfident about their English accents due to Confucian doctrine (Fang, 2016). The result of this research indicates that Indonesian EFL learners tend to be more thrilled learning Accent variation of English. It may help them to project an "imagined identity" of using English in various contexts and situations (Fang, 2016). An aspiring finding raised by Fang (2016) reported the identity negotiation performed by Chinese EFL learners toward English accents by embracing their Chinese accent in English as part of identity remarks as long as they can maintain good English conduct. Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2015) also reported that the attitude of Finnish students toward the accent variation is in the third position, with 81.2% of students thrilled with Accent variation. It indicates that accent is not the main interest for Finnish and Chinese EFL learners, while it is considered the most interesting segment in phonetics learning by Indonesian EFL learners. Similarly, Thai EFL learners share the same values with Indonesian learners toward English accents as reported by Phusit and Suksiripakonchai (2018) that Thai ELF learners show high positive attitudes toward American and British English pronunciation models and take less concern for their Thai English.

Similar to the result of this research that reported Accent Varieties as the most preferred topic of learning followed by segmental phonology. Savitri and

Andrianto (2021), who involved Indonesian EFL learners, reported that vowel system, speech rhythm, and accent differences were students' most favorable themes. It implies that most of Indonesia's EFL learners are interested in accent varieties. Nevertheless, Carrie (2017) mentioned that reference accents might also lead to a complex and dynamic attitude performed by EFL learners. To prevent that, clear instructions of various accents such as British and American accents also should be taught carefully.

In addition, Pei and Xing (2016) have found in their study that British and American accents still become the topmost favorable standard accent of English. They implicated 64 Chinese second-year EFL students of English major in their study. Then, it's suggested that the more exposure to a variety of English accents the students received, the easier they would be to discriminate against each kind of accent. Moreover, the more the L2 exposure given, the greater benefit the pronunciation ability of the L2 would be since it has proven to be correlated with eloquence and generic apprehension (grant (2014) as cited in Brekelmans, 2017). It can make them adapt to the real practice context of English.

Likewise, they thought that phonetics is important for their future career (statement 5). This finding replicates the previous studies reported by Savitri and Andrianto (2021) that most of the students show a positive attitude toward the importance of phonetics to their future careers, yet they perceive English phonetics as difficult challenging. It's undeniable that English has become one of the requirements for employment. English has an important role in almost all fields such as international relations, media, education, communications, economics and business, and even international travel and safety, and many others (Lauder, 2008). However, in real practice, English is still not widely spoken as daily communication in Indonesia. According to Lauder (2008), unlike countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, where English is recognized as a second language, and they use it along with their national language, English is not recognized as an official or second language in Indonesia policy. It causes the majority of the residents to speak the national language mostly all the time. On the contrary, English is included in school curricula to be taught and start to displace local languages (Kirkpatrick, 2012). This situation makes EFL learners in Indonesia, indirectly, have to get used to speaking or pronouncing correct English to help their future careers.

Moreover, to have better career and education opportunities also to develop dignity and self-image became the excuses why English is

acknowledged positively among learners (Abu-Snoubar, 2017). The distribution of the result shows that most of the students most agreed with the statement that phonetics helped them to improve their pronunciation and future career as it seen in figure 1, statement 3, 5, and 12 was the most chosen agreement with total up to 106 participants for each statement (see table 2). Finish EFL learners seem to be more concerned about learning English phonetics to improve their awareness of the English sound system rather than the pronunciation (Lintunen & Mäkilähde, 2015). Almaqrn and Alshabeb's (2017) study indicates that students were assured that their pronunciation ability improved by learning English Phonetics. In consequence, the majority of participants agreed that phonetics is important for them (statement 13). Researchers can't obtain more information that could be the excuse behind the statement.

Information of different manners and place of articulation that are acquired in learning English phonetics also helped them fix their pronunciation ability (statement 7). Moreover, students also perceived that phonetics transcription has also helped them pronounce words properly (statement 8). By acquiring both information of different manners and place of articulation and learning phonetics transcription, students' phonetics coding ability may be promoted. This is implied that it also assisted in building up students' awareness of the English sound system. This was supported by most participants that agreed on the statement which phonetics assists them to be aware of English sounds (statement 1). It implies that the students agree on the significance of phonetics learning to improve their English phonemic and phonological awareness since it significantly influences the English pronunciation skill. L2 pronunciation accuracy was found to have a strong positive relationship with L2 phonological awareness (Souza, 2015, p. 395). This means that the higher the phonological awareness of L2, where here is English, the higher the level of accuracy of the English pronunciation accuracy. Therefore, EFL learners are always advised to always be exposed and taught English to understand English phonological awareness and pronounce words correctly.

Despite learning English phonetics has shown positive influences on students' pronunciation ability, it was also considered as a challenging and difficult discipline (statements 4 & 6). The majority of students agreed that phonetics was challenging and difficult for them. A similar result was also reported by Savitri and Andrianto (2021). This matter has been a common matter for EFL students in English phonetics learning, as Lintunen and

Mäkilähde (2015) reported that research on Finnish EFL learners. It was quite understandable since they just acquired such terms as phonetics and phonology in the college realm. Indonesian EFL learners have not been taught phonetics and phonology before as they passed their 12 years of school; the IPA symbols have never been taught to them (Alam & Uddin, 2019). Moreover, teachers tend to focus on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and four language skills and neglect pronunciation practice since it was not merged into the curriculum (Hismanoglu, 2012). Whereas, IPA symbols have an important role in phonetics learning because it is the basis for them to pronounce the English word correctly. In the practice of English language teaching, some elements are not the focus of teachers. It may also be due to the abundance of phonetics details to remember (statement 9). In line with it, students still struggle in pronouncing English sounds such as /g/ and /gh/, especially when the /g/ sound was before the /m/ sound (Adeline, 2020). Yet, students not only learn IPA symbols but also segmental (the point and manner of articulation of consonants and tongue position, lip rounding, diphthongs, and triphthongs of vowels) and suprasegmental (accent, stress, intonation, rhythms, and syllable) knowledge in the English language. It was supported by Tergujeff (2012) who found in his study that suprasegmental and prosodic features were still often to be explicitly disregarded by teachers in teaching.

On top of that, there were different results on findings from the previous studies. The differences were reflected in statements 10, 11, 12, and 14. More than half of the students were able to list both vowel sounds and consonant sounds of English words (statements 10 & 11). Meanwhile, the previous study, Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2015), showed negative on both of those that denote participant incapacity. Yet, it's still quite similar to Savitri and Andrianto (2021) who found that only a few students could not list it. Still, there was a difference in the present study, the percentage of the students who were able to list consonants decreased and to list vowel increase.

Besides, both previous studies are Lintunen and Mäkilähde (2015), and Pei and Qin (2015) mentioned that learners tend to be unconfident in pronouncing English words. On the contrary, more than half of students tend to be more confident with it (statement 12). Therefore, most students showed neutral responses in focusing on a larger segment of speech than phonemes in the previous studies. Meanwhile, it turned out to be positive in this present study which denotes that they better learn larger speech segmentation than only focus on phonemes (statement 14). By focusing on speech segmentation, students were assumed to acquire phoneme segmentation skills too. Rokhman

et al. (2020) stated that phoneme segmentation ability would help EFL students conceive words sounds that have been concurrently segmented to their smallest section while listening by identifying the sound since it offers decoding ability.

After all, the majority of the results reflected quite similar results to Savitri and Andrianto (2021) on some aspects such as students' sounds word awareness, improved pronunciation skills, boost students' confidence and information of different manners and place articulations. The difference lies in the distribution of data, students preferred themes that are not included, and statement 14 which indicates their moderate responses toward it.

Overall, the findings had answered the research question regarding students' attitudes towards English phonetics learning that positive attitudes tend to be expressed by students. Under it, Toomnan and Intaraprasert (2015) had found that learners, who mostly showed positive responses, expressed naturally more regularly in the application of surmounting breakdowns in communication than those who showed negative responses. This would assist learners in performing better in speaking English. Positive attitudes will lead to effective oral communication too. To actualize communicative proficiency, comprehensible pronunciation is the crucial element (Pourhossein Gilakjani, 2016). By it, teachers and lecturers may incorporate English phonetics with other aspects of learning English when teaching. Then, a proper and comprehensible pronunciation may be acquired by students and can assist them in communication practice in the real world.

Conclusion

Despite the positive response performed by the participants about the significance of phonetics to their skills, career, and also self-esteem, the students acknowledge that phonetics learning is challenging and difficult. As also confirmed by their less-positive response toward their belief in their competency at the segmental level. Ever since a long time ago, it seems that phonetics terms have been difficult for many EFL students around the world to be fully acquired. Even though IPA symbols utilization, accents variety, and information of different manners and place of articulation have assisted EFL students to produce a clear and concise pronunciation that sounds like native-sounds, it's undeniable that it also causes students' confusion and difficulties. Many students still considered phonetics as challenging and difficult.

This study implied that there is a positive potential of English phonetics teaching for Indonesian EFL learners as they perform positive attitudes toward the benefits of learning English phonetics. Yet, the difficulties in learning phonetics are still strongly addressed as one of the challenging factors. Lastly, teachers or lecturers are prompted to utilize a new technique and/or technology when teaching phonetics so that students would understand the term better and can experience the real use of English phonetics. However, this study is only limited to the study of EFL learners' attitudes in one University. Further research was prompted to conduct a deeper investigation on students' phonetic learning evaluation and its relation to their motivation in the educational context. A bigger sample with more variety was also suggested to contribute new findings and insight in the field of English phonetics teaching.

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ORCID

Sri Ayu Istiqomah <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9871-5925>

Alies Poetri Lintangari <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7200-5183>

Widya Caterine Perdhani <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3469-0295>

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