



Students' Errors in Reading Indonesian Poetry "Aku" (I) in Terms of Articulation and Stressing-Intonation

Surastina Surastina

Higher Education of Teacher Training and Pedagogy PGRI Bandar Lampung, Indonesia

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Abstract

Reading poetry aloud needs special skills, i.e articulating, stressing, and intonating skills, so that the poetry meaning can be well understood by listeners. Those skills must be trained to Indonesian primary student for achieving competencies standard in learning Indonesian poetry. This research aims to describe the students' common errors in reading a famous Indonesian poetry entitled "Aku" by Chairil Anwar. This study was conducted to 120 primary students in Lampung Province, Indonesia which has been randomly chosen by using stratified random sampling technique. The result showed that most of students have low skills in reading poetry as indicated by high percentage of students doing errors. Error in articulating was mainly caused by different student dialect, meanwhile error in stressing-intonation were affected by low ability in interpreting poetry and their tendency in reading with spesific pattern. This findings can be used as a reference to evaluate student skills in reading Indonesian poetry.

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Address correspondence:
St. Khairil Anwar No. 79, Bandar Lampung 35116, Indonesia
E-mail: stkip.tina@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Reading poetry aloud is a way to appreciate poetry as a literary arts (Schillinger et al., 2010). The reader will try to identify, understand, and think critically about the meaning inside poetry (Cahnmann, 2003; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Piirto, 2002). Those appreciation process should be promoted by readers' desire to criticize, response, and appreciate the poetry content. Therefore, better someone in reading poetry aloud leads to better appreciation by readers or listeners (Ellis et al., 2003; Athanases, 2005; Schillinger et al., 2010; Novak, 2012).

There are some existing steps to read poetry aloud appropriately, 1) analyze the meaning inside to determine the feeling (happy, sad, spirit, and so on); 2) determine the interlude of poems; 3) determine which part of the poem with fast or slow intonation (Pound, 2009; Gordon, 2010); 4) articulate vowels and consonants clearly (Kuiken et al., 2004); 5) show body gestures to emphasize the impression (Raingruber, 2009). According to the steps, articulating, stressing, and intonating are the important skills in reading poetry appropriately.

Articulating is one of important skills in poetry reading (Durham, 1997; Faver, 2008; Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000; Koriat et al., 2002; Rasinski, 2006) that has to adjust with the standard phoneme applied in a country. In the context of Indonesian poetry, articulation has also be adjusted by Indonesian standard phoneme. There are 28 phonemes consisting of 6 vowel and 22 consonant phonemes. Those vowels are /a/i/u/e/o/e/, and consonant are /b/p/d/t/g/k/f/z/s/ /sy/kh/h/j/c/m/n/ny/ng/r/l/w/y/. Error in pronouncing phoneme potentially cause error in words articulation. For example, phoneme /f/ should not be pronounced by the phoneme /p/ or /v/.

The other skill that must be mastered in reading poetry aloud is stressing because improper stressing lead to different meaning (Winters, 1951; Ariail & Albright, 2005; Greene et al., 2010). By giving various stressing, it will

get easier for listener to interpret the poetry meaning conveyed by reader or writer. Besides stressing, intonation skills can not be ignored in reading poetry (Hadaway et al., 2001; Middleton, 2005; Rasinski, 2006). There are three types of intonation in poetry reading : 1) dynamic intonation, that is stressing on the important words; 2) tone intonation, that is high or low stressing. High intonation describe the joy, anger, amazement, and so on. Meanwhile, low intonation express sadness, doubt, despair, etc. ; 3) tempo intonation, that is slow or fast in pronouncing syllable or word (Muslich, 2008). Errors in intonation arises a striking difference in interpreting poetry. A good poetry reader always consider stressing properly in reading poetry aloud. Then, articulation and stressing-intonation are a prerequisite knowledges in reading poetry aloud.

Articulating and stressing-intonation skills are important to be mastered by Indonesian primary student for achieving competency standard in poetry learning. Poetry learning in school is expected to contribute in fostering the spirit of Indonesian young poet. Based on Indonesian National Curriculum, the competency requires student to read poetry aloud by using rhythm, volume, expression, and kinesthetic that suitable with the meaning of poetry (KTSP, 2006). By learning to read poetry aloud, students are expected to appreciate and interpret poetry for literary arts instruction and also take the lessons of it. However, research by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) found reading ability of Indonesian primary students is very low, which was ranked at 42 of 45 countries (Mullis et al., 2012). Especially in reading poetry, most of Indonesian primary student are less able to read appropriately (Kosmasari, 2014; Martha, 2011; Sunaryo, 2011) that caused by lack interest of it. This disparity potentially lead to Indonesian youths who are less appreciate poetry as a literature arts. Therefore, investigation of Indonesian students ability in reading poetry is very important.

One of the most commonly taught poetry in Indonesian school is "*Aku*" (I) by Chairil

Anwar who is perhaps the Indonesian poet best known among Westerner. As Johns (1964) said “Chairil describes himself as a wild beast, rejected by his peers. True, he wants to live a thousand years, but in his own way, fighting to tear down the props of hypocrisy that shore up the rotten facade of daily life and exulting in his own lack of involvement in them”. Although the poetry “*Aku*” is very popular and taught in almost all grades in Indonesia, students still have difficulty in reading poetry aloud properly. In this study, the students’ common errors in reading poetry “*Aku*” will be revealed in terms of articulation and stressing–intonation aspects. This information is expected to be used as a reference for improving the competency of Indonesian students in appreciating poetry.

METHODS

This study is a descriptive research to get a detail information about common mistake of Indonesian primary student in reading poetry “*Aku*”. This descriptive research was conducted to 120 primary students in Lampung Province, Indonesia which has been randomly chosen by using random sampling. Based on this sampling technique, each of population member have a same opportunity to be chosen as a research subject. All of sampling process was performed in a single step and each subject was independently chosen of the other member of the population. Data of students errors was divided to articulation and stressing–intonation error, that was collected by using performance test and video recording. Each sample was asked to read poetry aloud in front of the class, then students performance was recorded to evaluate their errors in articulating and stressing–intonating aspects. Students who make error was deeply interviewed to find out the reason why they do the mistakes. Main points of questions that has to be answered by student in depth interview process includes (1) language used in daily life conversation, (2) the meaning contained based on their personal interpretation, (3) intonation pattern in each lines of poetry.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The full version of poetry “*Aku*” (I) is presented below:

Aku (Chairil Anwar, 1943) *I* (Translation Burton Raffle)

<i>Kalau sampai waktuku</i>	<i>When my time comes</i>
<i>Ku mau tak seorang</i>	<i>I want to hear no one's</i>
<i>'kan merayu</i>	<i>cries</i>
<i>Tidak juga kau</i>	<i>Nor yours either</i>
<i>Tak perlu sedu sedan</i>	<i>Away with all who cry!</i>
<i>itu!</i>	

Here I am, a wild beast

<i>Aku ini binatang jalang</i>	<i>Driven out of the herd</i>
<i>Dari kumpulannya</i>	<i>Bullets may pearce my skin</i>
<i>terbuang</i>	<i>But I'll keep on</i>

<i>Biar peluru menembus</i>	<i>Carrying forward my</i>
<i>kulitku</i>	<i>wounds and my pain</i>

<i>Aku tetap meradang</i>	<i>Attacking</i>
<i>menerjang</i>	<i>Until suffering disappears</i>

<i>Luka dan bisa kubawa</i>	<i>And I won't care anymore</i>
<i>berlari</i>	<i>I want to live another</i>
<i>Berlari</i>	<i>thousand years</i>

<i>Hingga hilang pedih</i>	<i>(English version)</i>
<i>peri</i>	

<i>Dan aku akan lebih</i>	
<i>tidak peduli</i>	

<i>Aku mau hidup seribu</i>	
<i>tahun lagi!</i>	

(Indonesian version)

The meaning inside of poetry needs to be interpreted and appreciated well by listeners. Misinterpretation of meaning can be caused by errors in reading aloud, especially in giving articulation and stressing–intonation.

Articulation Error

The wrong articulated words in poetry “*Aku*” refers to the Indonesian standard phoneme showed by Table 1.

Table 1. Table 1. Sentence Containing Errors in Articulating

Sentences	Wrong Articulated Words	Stanza and Line	Percentage
<i>Biar peluru menembus kulitku</i>	<i>Biar</i> becomes <i>Piar</i>	Stanza: 2 Line: 3	60,80%
<i>Tak perlu sedu sedan itu</i>	<i>Perlu</i> becomes <i>Berlu</i>	Stanza: 1 Line: 4	44,17%
<i>Luka dan bisa kubawa berlari</i>	<i>Luka</i> becomes <i>Leka,</i> and <i>Kubawa</i> becomes <i>Kebawa</i>	Stanza: 3 Line: 1	42,50%
<i>Dan aku akan lebih tidak peduli</i>	<i>Dan aku</i> becomes <i>Denaku</i>	Stanza: 3 Line: 3	55,83%

As shown in table 1, there are 60.80% of students doing error in articulating phoneme /b/ in word *biar* becomes /p/, so that it will affect to the changes of its lexical meaning. Referring to Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI, 2005: 146), *biar* is a connecting words to express unconditional things. Meanwhile, the word *piar* certainly has no meaning.. The word *biar* in sentence *biar peluru menembus kulitku* (bullets may pearce my skin) is intended to the poets' ingnornance in ironic situation.

There are 44.17% of students pronounce phoneme /p/ become /b/ in word *perlu* in sentence *tak perlu sedu sedan itu* (away with all who cry). It will differentiate and change meaning in the first stanza. Lexically, *perlu* means *butuh* (need). Then, this error cause these sentence will not be conveyed properly to the listener. This result may be explained by the fact that two phonemes are indeed at one point articulator and also in the same category as the bilabial phoneme sounds which have similiar

sound. This error might be influenced by dialect used in everyday language when they communicate.

Error in articulation was also found in pronouncing phoneme /u/ becomes /ə/ on word *luka* (wounds) and *ku bawa* (shall i take) performed by 42.50% of students. It changes lead to significant differences in meaning. Lexically, *luka* (wounds) means *lecet* (ruptured, injuries, abrasions, etc.) meanwhile, *leka* has no meaning. Moreover, word *ku bawa* (shall i take) means *memegang* (hold or lift something while walking or moving from one place to another) but *kebawa* has a meaning in daily life as carried away accidentally (KBBI, 2005: 687). The word *ku* on the sentence *luka dan bisa ku bawa berlari* (wounds and poison shall I take aflee) shows the poet does not afraid to take any consequences in achieving his goals and ideals situation. The last error in articulating was found in pronouncing word *dan* (and) and *aku* (i) in the sentence *dan aku lebih tidak peduli* (and i should care even less) becomes *denaku*. Those words has to be read separately. However, there are 55,83% of students read it rapidly, so that it seems sounds as *denaku* that has no lexical meaning in Indonesian.

Depth interview result showed that the students' articulation error is due to the influence of dialect, idiolect, and incapability in giving interlude. The research sample comes from different ethnics in Indonesia such as Lampungnese, Javanese, Sundanese, and Semendonese. In daily life, they prefer to communicate using their local language than National Indonesian language which affect the way to articulate phonemes and also words.

Stressing–Intonation Error

Below are the right stressing–intonation for full version of poetry “*Aku*”, that presented in dynamic tone pattern (Bolinger, 1989):

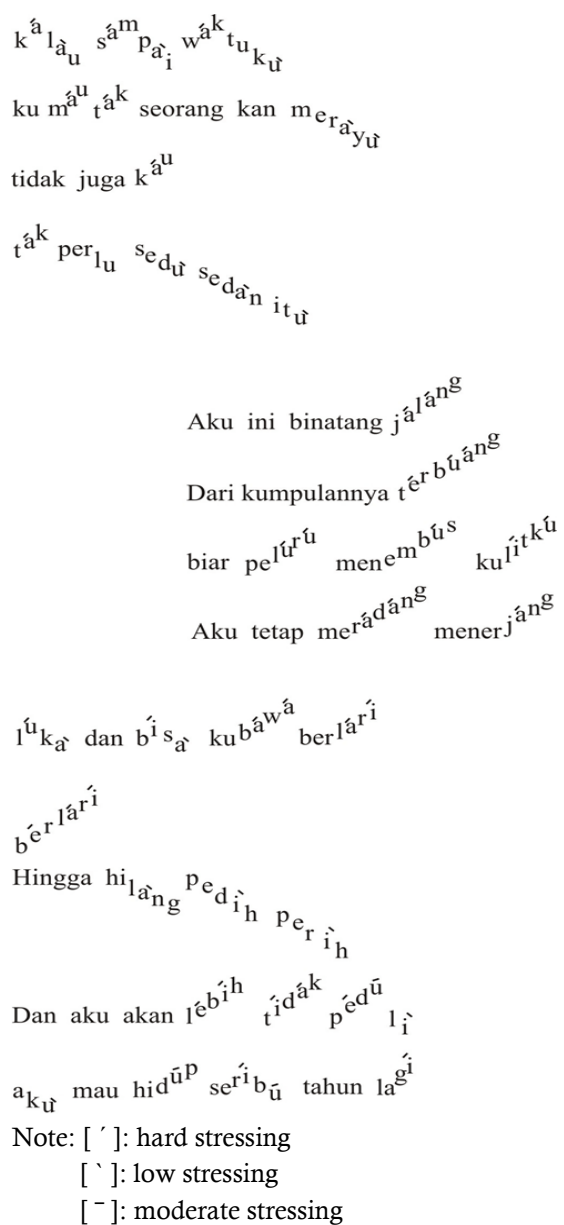


Figure 1. Full version of Poetry “Aku” Presented in Dynamic Tone Pattern (Bolinger, 1989):

In poetry reading, stressing-intonation gives tone variations to distinguish the purpose of sentence. By appropriate stressing-intonation, readers can distinguish the meaning of a word and the purpose of a sentence. Some students’ error in terms of stressing-intonation are showed by Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of students who make mistakes in stressing-intonation

Error	Stanza and Percentage
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	Line	
<i>Ku mau</i>	Stanza: 1 Line: 2	21.67%
<i>Tak</i>		
<i>Kau</i>	Stanza: 1 Line: 3	25.00%
<i>Aku</i>	Stanza: 2 Line: 1	34.17%
<i>Jalang</i>		
<i>Terbuang</i>	Stanza: 2 Line: 2	41.67%
<i>Menembus</i>	Stanza: 2 Line: 3	50.00%
<i>Kulitku</i>		
<i>Luka</i>	Stanza: 3 Line: 1	63.33%
<i>Bisa</i>		
<i>Aku</i>	Stanza: 3 Line: 5	92.50%
<i>Hidup</i>		
<i>Lagi</i>		

Students’ common errors in stressing-intonation as showed in table 2 are described below:

a. *Ku mau tak seorang kan merayu (i want to hear no one's cries)*

This sentence show that the poet really dont want to be affected by any persuasion from anyone to reach his goals. Referring to the meaning, students have to give high stressing-intonation on word *mau* and *tak* (as and). It is because Chairil has strong desire and passion (related to sentence no.1). However, there are 21.67% of students give low stressing-intonation on word *mau* (as) and flat intonation on word *tak*. This error will certainly cause misinterpretation for listeners or may can be perceived that the poet did not too serious to reach his ambition. Based on interview result, they feel confuse to give high or low stressing-intonation, and used to follow their feeling and habit in reading poetry.

b. *Tidak juga kau (nor yours either)*

The word *kau* is the key word to get best representation about the purpose of this sentence and the meaning of a whole poetry. This

sentence was intended to describe how Chairil does not care anyone including the most cruel and feared authority, he will continue to reach his goals. It is clear that this sentence should be read as with no interlude between word *tidak* and *juga*, then the word *kau* should be given very high stressing-intonation than the others. However, the results showed that there are 25.00% of students make error by giving interlude and hard stressing on word *tidak juga*. This error because they used to speak louder when pronounce word *tidak* (no) to emphasize a prohibition according to their daily life. Interestingly, students give low stressing on the words *kau*. This error will certainly not give the impression that the poet did not afraid of anyone, instead low spirit of poet.

c. *Aku ini binatang jalang (here I am, a wild beast)*

The poet illustrated himself as a wild beast because he want to be an independent man without anyone who can affected him in reaching his goals (the Independence of Indonesia). Therefore, the sentence *aku ini binatang* can be read rapidly in flat intonation and no interlude, then word *jalang* has to be read with very high stressing to affirm that he is absolutely independent. However, there are 34.17% of students agreed to put high stressing-intonation on the word *aku*, and low on word *jalang*. Depth interview result showed that students pay more attention to sentence textually than the meaning contained. According to their interpretation, the poet wants to show his pride and super confidence, so that the word *aku* should be read with high stressing-intonation. Moreover, they also assume that word *jalang* does not need stressing because it is only an adverb of word *binatang*.

d. *Dari kumpulannya terbangun (Driven out of the herd)*

By this sentence, Chairil claims himself as a member of opposition group, so he and friends as a discriminated group. Therefore, the sentence has to be read in flat without interlude then pitch rise on word *terbangun*. However, it was such a habit that students (41.67%) read poetry with low stressing-intonation in the end

of sentence. In depth interview, they argue that word *terbangun* describe the poet come from marginal group and being desperate, so it must be read with low voice and low tone.

e. *Biar peluru menembus kulitku (Bullets may pierce my skin)*

There are half of sample (50,00% of students) misled by the diction used in this sentence. Students pay more attention to sentence textual than the meaning contained. They assumed that words *menembus kulitku* contain negative connotation with extreme pain, so they give low stressing-intonation on it as . However, that words has to be read with high stressing-intonation (as $\text{men}^{\text{em}^{\text{b}^{\text{u}^{\text{s}}}}$ $\text{ku}^{\text{i}^{\text{k}^{\text{u}}}}$ to show Chairil have a great spirit to fight for his goals. He does not care anything though he will feel the pain in his fight.

f. *Luka dan bisa kubawa berlari (Carrying forward my wounds and my pain)*

This sentence mean Chairil will not stop, he will keep moving, and struggling to reach his goals eventhough he will feel the deadly pain (indicated by words *luka dan bisa*). Therefore, it has to be read with low stressing-intonation on words *luka dan bisa* to show painful, and high stressing-intonation on words *kubawa* and *berlari* to give the impression of everlasting spirit . However, 63.33% of students can not understand about the meaning. They assume that *luka dan bisa* must be read in loud to show how much pain will be felt by the poet. Otherwise, words *kubawa* and *berlari* was read in low stressing-intonation as their feeling and habit in reading the end of sentence in poetry.

g. *Aku mau hidup seribu tahun lagi (I want to live another thousand years)*

This poetry was closed by the sentence *aku mau hidup seribu tahun lagi* that shows spirit of the poet which never goes out in reaching his goals, it has to keep and be continued by next generation. To have that meaning, this sentence need to be read with high stressing-intonation on word *hidup* to show Chairils' sincerity to keep fighting and also on word *lagi* to show there is a unfinished mission. However, there is 92.50% of students read it in different ways. They give high

stressing-intonation on word *aku* dan low on words *hidup* and *lagi*. They believe that every word *aku* in this poetry has to be showed up with high stressing-intonation in reading, but *hidup* and *lagi* was read with low intonation to indicate the end of poetry.

Based on the data and description above, it can be understood that most of students do not capable to use right stressing-intonation to describe meaning and purpose of poetry. Depth interview gives several information about factors that cause students' error in giving stressing-intonation. *First*, students used to read poetry using pattern or in reading poetry. *Second*, some students give more focus on sentence textually without consider the meaning. *Third*, student give wrong interpretation, that caused by their experience and habit in using daily language.

CONCLUSION

From the research, it can be concluded that there are many errors of articulation and stressing-intonation in reading the poetry "*Aku*" by Chairil Anwar. Students who did mistakes seem unable to understand and appreciate well the meaning of poetry. Different dialect used in their daily life communication caused students' error in articulation, meanwhile stressing-intonation errors more affected by students incapability in understanding the meaning of poetry and their tendency in reading with spesific pattern. Data of students' errors presented in this research are the most common and frequently errors done by Indonesian primary students in reading poetry, especially poetry "*Aku*". Therefore, this data can be used as a teachers' guideline to evaluate students' competency in reading poetry.

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