Hearing the Unheard: Exploring the Phonological Features of Child Development Workers in Selected Centers in Antique, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study ascertained the phonological characteristics of childcare providers in a province in the middle of the Philippines. Specifically, the goal was to pinpoint the segmental and supra-segmental (stress and intonation) characteristics of the child development workers as well as any potential influencing factors. Based on the definitions of Philippine English as a unique form of English, the paper employs a qualitative-descriptive research design with document analysis to examine pertinent data from child development workers who were purposively chosen. The results showed that there are instances of substitution and absence in various consonant, and front and back vowel sounds. Additionally, the results verified that the affricate noises were present. Regarding supra-segmental characteristics, most informants place the primary stress on the second syllable of two-syllable words; for three-syllable words, the primary stress was placed on the first syllable, whereas for four-syllable words, the primary stress was placed either on the second or third syllable rather than the first. The generation of rising intonation in statements and W-H questions is the characteristic for intonation pattern. The results of this study suggest that the phonological characteristics of the childcare providers, who are mesolectal English speakers, may be impacted by their exposure to the first language. Ultimately, the research draws the conclusion that to address the concern over these traits, an intervention program is required.

Keywords: Phonological features, perceived English proficiency, qualitative, child development workers, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, there are over 7,000 languages in the world with various sound structures [1]. There are differences between these languages in terms of tone, stress patterns, vowel and consonant sounds, and other aspects [2]. Phonology is concerned with these systems [3]. Since 1960s, English has gained popularity in Asia and has also been adopted and regulated. Kachru [4] contended that English is not only a language of Asia, but Asia itself. This is because more people speak English in Asia than in US, UK, Australia, and New Zealand. This is why Asia provides an integrated profile of English within the concentric circles model of the spread of English [5].

Moreover, Jubilado [6] emphasized that Philippine English is considered distinct in Southeast Asia due to its origins in the United States of America (USA), which sets it apart from other adjacent countries. Speakers of different mother tongues within the same environment simultaneously acquire a common language that serves a unifying linguistic resource is the process that gives rise to Philippine English (PhE) [7]. Meanwhile, education has been widely used by educated Filipinos nationwide in a variety of professions. It was further suggested that Philippine English be taught in Philippine schools and was commonly characterized as a variation of General American English [8].

With time, English steadily deviated from colonial norms, giving rise to a "transplanted variety" of the language that is more in line with Filipino culture [9]. Llamzon's [10] groundbreaking research provided evidence for this hypothesis. "Language is like the clothes one wears. When Filipinos speak English, they speak it the Filipino way" was the main metaphor he used to support his position.

Additionally, the role of early childhood providers is vital in the child's language development since the foundation of language skills is developed in the early childhood [11]. The developmental years are among the most important developmental stages where reliance towards caregivers such as child development workers is in a high degree [12].

Research indicates that the quality of care such as that provided by the child development workers has an impact on the language development of infants and toddlers [12]. Skinner's [13] "The Evolution of Verbal Behavior" emphasized that through mimicking the speech of the people around them, children are able to pick up language. Children therefore are rewarded for mimicking the language once they start doing so, which encourages them to continue speaking it. Furthermore, child development workers are able to promote language development by incorporating language-focused activities such as singing songs, reading aloud and conversations during play [14].

Similarly, Piaget [15] emphasized the importance of the children's interaction with their environment in order to make sense of the language around them. Moreover, children who are exposed to a diverse vocabulary at an early age tend to perform better in academic tasks [16]. This implies that the child development workers who interact with youngsters have a long term impact on the academic pursuit of the children. This theories and inquiries led to a better knowledge of language learning. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the phonological characteristics of child development workers, as these characteristics may influence children's language development.

There were studies conducted on Philippine English Phonology. Piorac [17] made a study on the phonological features of Philippine English spoken by tourism service providers. Tayao [7] and Tayao and Mesthrie [8] wrote on Philippine English phonology. Regala-Flores [18] explored on phonological features of basilectal Philippine English. Finally, Limpiada [19] talked about the phonology of *Kinaray-a* spoken in the province of Antique. To date, however, there is a dearth of studies pertaining to the phonological features of child development workers particularly in Western Visayas, Philippines. This was the gap that this study filled in.

Thus, this paper investigated the Philippine English phonological features of the child development workers in Antique, Philippines during 2022-2023. Specifically, it determined what lectal category the participants belong based on the highest educational attainment, domains of language used, and their perceived English proficiency. Likewise, it identified the Philippine English phonological features practiced by the child development workers in terms of segmental features like vowels and consonants, and supra-segmental features like stress and intonation patterns. Also, it identified what factors influence the Philippine English phonological features. Taking note of the importance of language development among children, the findings of this study will be used to identify a possible intervention program for day care workers.

Furthermore, this study made use of the Kachruvian [21] principle, Martin's [25] principle and Lectalframwework of Llamzom [20] as the framework of this study. The Kachruvian principle describes the use of World Englishes [21] in a set of overlapping circles where Philippines belongs to the outer or expanding circle [22,23]. Since the principle situates the Philippines at the outer circle, it is further emphasized that the role of the first language has a solid influence in the learning process hence, language instruction is focused as well as phonology [24]. This principle was strengthened by Martin [25] saying that Philippines have three circles within whileLlamzon [20] provides a description of distinctive phonological features at the three levels: acrolect, mesolect, and basilect.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative-descriptive design to describe the participants' data of the spoken discourse. This design was used to gather the data through interview and recording of their actual discourse while the descriptive approach was utilized to describe their phonological features. Here, it explored their phonological features through describing and analyzing their solicited utterances. The participants were the 35 day care workers coming from the barangay day care centers of the selected municipalities of Antique, Philippines. They were determined using purposive sampling. They were classified according to their lectal category relative to their highest educational attainment, domain of English use, and perceived English proficiency.

The study adopted the instrument devised by Regala-Flores [18] following the procedures used by Tayao [7] and Llamzon [20]. This instrument contained a list of words and expressions which made use of the critical segmental and supra-segmental features of English Phonology.

In this instrument, it profiled the participants' personal information such as name, highest educational attainment, and frequency of use of English in various environment like home, workplace, church, market, etc. this revealed their own assessment of proficiency relative to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The words and sentences were read by the participants and recorded. The recorded data were transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). After this, the researcher used the inter-coding of the transcription of utterances. There were two more transcribers aside from the researcher who coded and transcribed the recorded data. Finally, the inter-coders convened to compare the transcriptions and came up with a common decision with regards to the sounds heard and plotted it for analysis. After the finalization of the transcription, the participants' distinctive phonological features were analyzed and described based on the frequency of occurrences of a given phonological feature.

In terms of the data analysis, the recorded data were analyzed and described using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Following the transcriptions of the recordings, the distinctive phonological features of the participants were analyzed and described based on the frequency of occurrences of a given phonological feature. There were external transcribers who convened and discussed the process of transcribing using IPA phonetic transcription. They recursively listened to the recorded data as to how the participants produce the vowel and consonant sounds. This is similar with the inter-coding technique observed by researchers [26,27,28,29]. After listening to the recordings, the transcribers started to individually transcribe the speakers' data using IPA symbols. After the analysis and coding of the scripts, the transcribers convened and checked for discrepancies in their transcriptions until they agreed on the final versions of recording transcripts.

Next, the researcher carefully looked at the variations on the sounds produced by the participants as compared to General American English. The participants' occurrences of pronunciation variations to that of GAE pronunciation were noted. Instances in which the participants made substitutions to the GAE pronunciation were also given attention and noted. Finally, a comparison on the segmental and supra-segmental features of GAE and to what the speakers produced was also carried out. The researcher also made use of a simple calculations of the frequencies of the occurrences.

To ensure the ethical soundness of the paper, the researcher adhered to the guideline set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). Specifically, the participants were properly oriented and ensured informed consents to signify their willingness to participate. Also, it addressed issues in terms of privacy and confidentiality as per Data Privacy Act of 2012.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants' Lectal Category

Table 1 presents the profile of the participants in terms of highest educational attainment and domains of language used while table 2 presents their perceived English proficiency. In terms of highest educational attainment, majority of the participants are college graduate (f= 30, 86%). It is on the other hand noteworthy that the participants are not graduates of any education courses as the researcher asked them. In terms of the use of English, all the participants use English in their workplace (f=35). This may be because some of their lessons in the classrooms uses English as medium of instruction.

Table 1.*Participants' Educational Attainment and Domain of Language Use*

	f	%
Educational Attainment		
College Undergraduate	5	14
College Graduate	30	86
Language Use		
Home	3	9
Neighborhood/community	6	17
Workplace	35	100
Church	7	20
School	27	77

In terms of the self-rating of their own English proficiency, majority of the participants' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills is in the average level as presented in table 2.

Table 2.*Participant's Self-Rating of the English Proficiency*

Macro Skill	Excellent		Good		Average		Poor	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Reading	2	5.71	15	42.86	17	48.57	1	2.86
Writing	1	2.86	10	28.57	24	68.57	0	0
Speaking	1	2.86	6	17.14	26	74.29	2	5.71
Listening	2	5.71	10	28.58	21	60	2	5.71

Based on the data gathered through the participants' educational attainment, domain of language use, and perceived English proficiency, it is therefore safe to say that in general, the respondents are categorized not as basilectal, but majority of them fall under the category of mesolect as described by Tayao [7] that the mesolect group is composed of professionals who use English in their field of work and those participants rated themselves "good" or "average" and rarely "excellent" in their English abilities.

Philippine English Phonological Features Practiced by Child Development Workers

The segmental features of the participants were identified through a consolidated transcription from the audio recordings where they read aloud a total of 36 words containing critical vowel sounds and 33 words containing critical consonant sounds. The segmental features were analyzed through document analysis to identify the existing features. On the other hand, the supra-segmental features of the participants were identified through a consolidated transcription from the audio recordings where the participants read aloud a total

of 15 words containing critical stress placements and a dialogue with 10 sentences to identify the participants' intonation pattern. The supra-segmental features of the participants were analyzed through a document analysis to identify the existing features.

The Segmental Features of Child Development Workers

The findings of the study revealed that the PhE segmental features practiced by child development workers occur in the vowel and consonant sounds. The following are the specific findings in the segmental level:

Vowels. In general, there are occurrences where the participants were able to produce the 10 vowel sounds though many of these sounds were misplaced which means that many were substituted or interchanged. In the case of the front tense and lax vowel sounds, the study found out that the participants can realize the sound /i / when the sound is found in the final position such as in the word "fifteen", while some substituted it with /ɪ / in one syllable words such as in the words "sheep", "deep" and "please". As to the front mid /ɛ/ sound, majority of the respondents were able to realize the sound such as in the words "lend", "edge" and "get" though a few substitute it with either /ɪ / or /i / sounds. Interestingly, the mid /eɪ/ sound was realized such as in the word "edge". As to the front low / æ/ sound, majority of the respondents substitute the sound with either /eɪ/ or /a/ such as in the words "mango" and "land".

Table 3.*Phonetic Production of FRONT Vowel sounds of English Words*

Segment	Feature	Description/Actual pronunciation	f	%
/i/	substitution of /i/ with /ɪ/	sheep /ʃɪp/	23	65.71
		deep /dIp/	7	20
		please /plɪz/	7	20
/ɛ/	substitution of /ɛ/ with /ɪ / or /i/	lend /lɪnd/	3	8.57
		lend /lind/	1	2.86
/eɪ/	realization of /eɪ/	gate /geɪt/	35	100
/ æ/	substitution of /æ/ with /eɪ / or /a/	mango /meɪŋgo/	17	48.57
		mango /maŋgo/	6	17.14
		land /land/	20	57.14

Generally, the participants were able to realize the CENTRAL mid /ə/ or **/ʌ/** sounds. Meaningfully assessed, they were clearly able to utter the sounds both in the initial position as to the one syllable words such as "nurse" and "truck" and the final position such as in the word "tricycle".

Table 4.*Phonetic Production of CENTRAL Vowel sounds of English Words*

Segment	Feature	Description/Actual	f	%

		pronunciation		
/ə/ and **/ʌ/**	realization of the /ə/ and **/ʌ/** sounds	nurse /nərs/	35	100
		tricycle /traɪsɪkəl/	35	100
		truck / trʌk/	35	100

In the case of the back high vowel /ʊ/ and /u/ sounds, there was a clear realization of such sounds even though the participants sometimes interchange the sounds such as in the words “look” and “put”. On the other hand, the word “tool” which has a /u/ sound in the GAE is substituted with /a/ sound by a minimal number of child development workers. On the other hand, in terms of the back mid /oʊ/ sound, it is substituted with /u/ sound such as in the one syllable word “toe” yet was realized in the final sound such as in the word “mango”. Additionally, /ɔ/ sounds are substituted with /oʊ/ as exemplified in the utterances of the word “saw” where the consonant “w” is given a voiced /w/ sound and was also shown in the production of the word “Paul” where the participants seem to produce a higher rounded tense vowel sound rather than /ɔ/ which is in the mid vowel and is lax. Similarly, the back low sound /a/ was also substituted with /oʊ/ such as in the word “bought”.

Table 5.*Phonetic Production of BACK Vowel sounds of English Words*

Segment	Feature	Description/Actual pronunciation	f	%
/ʊ/	substitution of /ʊ/ with /u/	look /luk/	21	60
		put /put/	17	48.57
/u/	substitution of /u/ with /a/	tool / tal /	3	8.57
/oʊ/	substitution of /oʊ/ with /u/	toe /tu/	25	71.43
/ɔ/	substitution of /ɔ/with /oʊ/	saw /soʊ/	23	65.71
		Paul /poʊl/	17	48.57
/a/	substitution of /a/ with /oʊ/	bought /boʊt/	18	51.43

Based on the above results on the segmental features in vowel sounds practiced by the child development workers, it is evident that they can produce the different vowel sounds as described by the GAE yet, many of this sounds were misplaced. This can be attributed to their exposure to English movies and music as well as through listening and watching local news, trainings and nature of work as confirmed by the participants.

Meaningfully analyzing the results, the apparent characteristic of their phonological features in terms of the production of the vowel sounds, is the substitution of the sounds. Many sounds in different height and location of articulation are interchanged or substituted by another sound. For instance, the /ɛ/ sound is substituted with either /i/ or /ɪ /. These sounds, though all are articulated in the same position of the tongue, which is FRONT, they differ in the height where the /ɛ/ sound is in the middle while /i/ and /ɪ / are both high. This can be attributed to the presence of the high /i/ and /ɪ / and complementary sounds and are phonologically similar in the *karay-a* phonology as illustrated by Limpiada [19]. The study of

Regala-Flores [18] describes the presence of use of front upper high /i/, lower high /I/, and higher mid /e/ among the *Cebuano* speakers which can also be observed among the participants of this study. This is not a distinct sound in Philippine English [23]. The same results were found out in the study of basilectal Philippine English by Regala-Flores [18].

Moreover, the production of the central mid /ə/ and ***/ʌ/*** sounds were fully realized and is overwhelming. This could be attributed to the regular occurrence of such sound in the *kinaray-a* phonology [19] thus, they were able to correctly produce the sound in the words such as "tricycle" and "nurse" which has the presence of the same /ə/ sound as that of the *kinaray-a* phonology. It is also remarkable to analyze the variations in the production of the diphthong /oʊ/. This sound was interchanged with /ɔ/ as in "saw /and /a/ as in bought. It is notable that the participants produced the sound /oʊ/ when the words have two vowel sounds such as "aw" in "saw and "ou" in bought. However, they have no problem in producing the /eɪ/ sound. This could be attributed to the absence of diphthong in the *kinaray-a* phonology based on Limpiada [19]. Tayao and Mesthrie [8] points out that "English learners find difficulty with allophones or those letters which are pronounced differently based on how it is orthographically written as it is not present in our own language."

Consonants. It was found out in this study that the aspirations of voiceless stops in General American English (GAE) such as /p/, /t/, and /k/ in the initial and final position are not evident among the respondents. This result is evident in the utterances of the words such as "perfect", for initial /p/ sound; "toe", "teacher", "telephone", "touch" for initial /t/ sound; "kissed" for initial /k/ sound and words such as "look", "fork", "tank", "elephant", "chart", "perfect", "boat" for final sounds. This is in conformance with the study of Tayao [7] and Regala-Flores [18] where the same findings were discovered.

Moreover, Regala-Flores [18] focused on the basilect group while the results of Tayao [7] were gathered from the 3 groups (acrolect, mesolect and basilect) where she found out that there was rareness in the occurrence of those sounds in the acrolect group and total absence in the mesolect and basilect group. In terms of the labiodental fricatives, /f/ (voiceless) and /v/ (voiced) were uttered by replacing it with /p/ and /b/ by some of the respondents. This was evident in the utterances of the words such as "perfect" "elephant" and "fifty-five" where the /f/ sounds are replaced by /p/ and words such as "five", "twelve", "vote" and "vibes" where the /v/ sounds are replaced by /b/ by majority of the participants specifically on final sound such as "five". These findings are incongruence with Tayao and Mesthrie [8] that Filipino speaker substitute /f/ to /p/ and /v/ to /b/ due to the absence of these sounds in the native language.

Table 6.*Phonetic Production of English Words on Labiodental Fricatives*

Segment	Feature	Description/Actual pronunciation	f	%
/f/	Substitution of /f/ with /p/	perfect /pərpɛk/	2	5.71
		elephant /ɛləpant/	4	14.29
		fifty-five /pɪptɪ-paɪb/	8	22.86
/v/	Substitution of /v/ with /b/	five /faɪb/	30	85.71
		vibes /baɪbz/	6	17.14

In the case of interdental fricatives such as /θ/ (voiceless) and /ð/ (voiced), the sounds were largely absent in the features of child development workers. These sounds

were replaced by alveolar stops /t/ and /d/. this is evident in the utterances of the word such as “thousand” and “thank” where the /θ/ replaced by /t/, and the word “those” where the sound /ð/ is replaced by /d/. One of the factors of mispronunciation of the sound according to Ambalegin and Arianto [30] is the mother tongue interference, educational background, and environmental background. Filipinos substitute or merge /t/ for /θ/ and /d/ for /ð/, respectively [18,23,8].

Table 7.*Phonetic Production of English Words on Interdental Fricatives*

Segment	Feature	Description/Actual pronunciation	f	%
/θ/	Substitution of /θ/ with /t/	thousand /taʊzand/	22	62.86
		thank /tæŋk/	11	31.43
/ð/	Substitution of /ð/ with /d/	those /doʊs/	18	51.43

Moreover, in terms of the affricates /ʧ/ and /ʤ/, the respondents conformed to the utterance of the sounds in the GAE for the initial position such as in “church”, “chart”, “shepherd”, and “sheep”, and in the final position such as “church”, “watch” and “touch”. In Regala-Flores [18], a similar result was found out where the participants realized affricate sounds both in the initial and final sounds. In addition, the participants conformed to the retroflex sound of /r/. This can be attributed to the results of Limpiada [19] on “A phonology of Kinaray-a as spoke in Antique” describes the sound of /r/ as alveolar retroflex, thus the production of sounds of /r/ in English of a *Kinaray-a* native speaker conforms to the GAE. On the other hand, Tayao [7] revealed that the sound of /r/ in mesolect group is rendered as rolled or one-tap /r/ which does not conform to the GAE retroflex sound.

Finally, in the case of consonant clusters, a number of participants did not realize the sound of /t/ specifically at the final position such as in the words “kissed” and “perfect”. It is notable that the absence of the sound of /t/ in the final position is frequent in the word “perfect” where the /t/ sound follows the vowel sound /ɛ/ while it is lesser in the case where /t/ follows a consonant sound such as /s/. These findings also conformed with that of Regala-Flores [18] on basilect group and Tayao [7] on the 3 groups. Moreover, there was also an absence in the /θ/ sound when it blends with another voiceless fricative at the final position such as in the word “twelfth”.

Table 8.*Phonetic Production of English Words on Consonant Clusters*

Segment	Feature	Description/Actual pronunciation	f	%
/t/	Absence of the /t/ sound at the end	kissed /kɪs/	11	31.43
		perfect /pərfɛk/	27	77.14
/θ/	Absence of the /θ/ sound at the end	twelfth /twɛlf/	35	100

Meaningfully, the segmental features of child development workers in consonant sounds were characterized by substitution and absence of different sounds. Most of the substitutions are from the voiced and voiceless sounds specifically in the labiodental and

interdental fricative sounds such as /v/ in the final position as in “five”, /θ/ in the initial position as in “thousand” and /ð/ in the initial position as in “those”. Moreover, the absence of /t/ sound especially in the end is noticed as well as the /θ/ sound. This could be attributed to the absence of the same in the *kinaray-a* phonology as described by Limpiada [19]. Tayao and Mesthrie [8] described the rare presence of the aspirated /p/, /t/, and /k/ sounds among the acrolect group while the absence of such in the basilect and mesolect group. The same case was noted in the participants of this study.

In the variety of Philippine English, there are 24 distinct consonant sounds. This number is similar to the acrolectal variety as described by Tayao [7]. As she observed, the acrolect and mesolect both have consonant inventories like that of American English. It is notable to point out that the English affricates such as /ʧ/ and /ʤ/ do not occur in Tagalog and in many other Philippine language except on words which are considered loaned [31]. Tayao and Mesthrie [8] cited that the mesolect Philippine English speakers are influenced by the native language in the pronunciation of these consonants and in other cases, these sounds are merged with other phonemes. Yet, the findings of this study showed that all the participants were able to produce the sound without merging or interchanging with other sounds. It could be concluded that there is a presence of these sounds in the participants' native language thus they can produce the sounds correctly.

The Supra-segmental Features of Child Development Workers

The supra-segmental features of the participants were identified through a consolidated transcription from the audio recordings where the participants read aloud a total of 15 words containing critical stress placements and a dialogue with 10 sentences to identify their intonation pattern. The participants' supra-segmental features were analyzed through a document analysis to identify the existing features. The following are the specific findings in the supra-segmental level:

Stress. To investigate the word stress present among the child development workers involved in this study, there were 15 words included to gather the data which were read orally by the participants. The oral reading was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Table 9 shows the list of these words, the syllabication per word and the placement of the primary stress as uttered by the participants.

The findings revealed that among the two-syllable words in the list of words, only the word “carton” was stressed on the first syllable by most of the participants. This conforms to the GAE word stress pattern for two syllable words. On the other hand, the word “menu” was given the stress on the second syllable by a substantial number of participants. However, on a two-syllable word with GAE primary stress on the second syllable for a two-syllable word, the word “bamboo” was given an overwhelming number of stresses on the first syllable by the participants.

Moreover, in the case of three-syllable words with GAE primary stress on the first syllable such as “seventy”, the participants conform with the GAE pattern which put the stress on the first syllable, however, on the word “talented”, they deviate from the standards of the GAE pattern. Moreover, in terms of three-syllable words which are stressed on the second syllable on GAE pattern such as the word “determine”, “utensil” and “percentage”, the participants did not conform with the GAE pattern since these words were stressed on the first syllable as shown in their utterances.

Furthermore, in the case of the four-syllable words, the participants gave the stress for the words “honorable”, “comfortable” and “ceremony” on the second syllable while the words such as “cemetery”, “category”, and “military” was given the stress on the third syllable. These words are stressed on the first syllable in the GAE norm thus the stress pattern on this group of words as uttered by the participants do not conform to the GAE pattern. Remarkably, in the GAE norm, the word “elementary” was given the four-syllabication

pattern yet the participants read the word as in a five-syllable word. These findings are in conformity with Regala-Flores [18] and Tayao [7].

Table 9.*Word Stress*

Words	Correct word stress		Incorrect word stress	
	f	%	f	%
Bamboo	0	0	35	100
Carton	29	82.86	6	17.14
Menu	1	2.86	34	97.14
Seventy	31	88.57	4	11.43
Talented	12	34.29	23	65.71
Determine	4	11.43	31	88.57
Utensil	1	2.86	34	97.14
Percentage	0	0	35	100
Cemetery	2	5.71	33	94.29
Honorable	11	31.43	24	68.57
Comfortable	4	11.43	31	88.57
Category	5	14.29	30	85.71
Ceremony	6	17.14	29	82.86
Military	4	11.43	31	88.57
Elementary	0	0	35	100

Table 10.*List of word, syllabication, per word and the placement of primary stress*

Words	Placement and Frequency (f) of the Primary Stress									
	syllable	f	syllable	f	syllable	f	syllable	f	syllable	f
Bamboo	bam	35	boo	0						
Carton	car	29	ton	6						
Menu	me	1	nu	34						
Seventy	se	31	ven	3	ty	1				
Talented	ta	12	len	22	ted	1				
Determine	de	24	ter	4	mine	7				
Utensil	u	32	ten	1	sil	2				
Percentage	per	35	cen	0	tage	0				
Cemetery	ce	2	me	3	te	30	ry	0		
Honorable	ho	11	no	24	ra	0	Ble	0		
Comfortable	com	4	for	31	ta	0	ble	0		
Category	ca	5	te	7	go	23	ry	0		
Ceremony	ce	6	re	16	mo	12	ny	1		
Military	mi	4	li	0	ta	31	ry	0		
Elementary	e	0	le	0	men	35	ta	0	ry	0

Meaningfully assessed, based on the results of the study, the researcher can infer that in terms of stress, the child development workers differ greatly form the GAE standard. The participants' primary stress on two-syllable words are mostly given to the second syllable. Moreover, the obvious variation of stress is seen especially on the three-syllable where most of the participants put the stress on the first syllable for words which should be stressed on the second syllable in the GAE format. Moreover, in terms of the four-syllable words which

should be stressed on the first syllable, they gave the stress either on the second or third syllable. Philippine English have lexical stress just like American and Tagalog English. The stress in the acrolect mostly follows the same patterns as in American English, although there are few words that differ in syllable placement [8]. However, there are no existing phonetic research on stress in Philippine English. The present data do not allow for a detailed phonetic analysis of how stress is marked in this variety.

Intonation. This study also investigated another supra-segmental feature which is intonation. The participants were requested to read sample speech patterns through reading aloud a sample structured dialogue to gather data. It was also recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.In general, majority of the participants in the study followed the rising-falling intonation pattern (2-3-1). Depending on the type of sentence in the dialogue, the intonation pattern of the participants varies.

In the case of questions which are answerable by yes or no, all the participants produced the correct intonation as in the following examples.

Am I?
Are you from Antique?
We used to be classmates, remember?

In terms of questions pertaining to asking details (W-H questions) there were instances that some intonation at the end of the sentence is incorrect as the participants tend to remain in the high tune as of the following examples:

By the way, what's your name?
How about you?

For sentences which express facts, the participants were generally able to conform to the GAE rising-falling intonation pattern as of the following examples:

I'm Sarah.
You're right.
Your guess is right.
I think I have met you before.

Table 11.*Participants' Features on Intonation*

Statements	With features (f)	%	Without features (f)	%
Yes-No questions				
Do I?	0	0	35	100
Are you from Cebu?	0	0	35	100
We used to be classmates, remember?	0	0	35	100
WH questions				
By the way, what's your name?	8	23	27	77
How about you?	10	29	25	71
Statement of facts				
I'm Joseph.	3	9	32	91
You're right.	4	11	31	89
Your guess is right.	9	26	26	74

I think I have met you before.	11	31	24	69

Meaningfully, the variations in the intonation of sentences such as W-H questions can be associated to the study of [18] which found out that the participants did not fully realize the intonation of the native speakers. Some of the non-English major student teachers according to Luib-Beltran [32], master fluency in English but failed to utter the correct intonation pattern for both Yes-No Questions and Wh-Questions. She further added that the native language hampers in the production of intonation patterns of the second language. In the case of stating statements, all of the participants conform to the GAE intonation pattern. It can also be observed that all participants used the rising-falling intonation pattern in stating simple statements. In contrast, Tayao and Mesthrie [8] found out that there is an occurrence of juncture or pausing among the basilectal group were observed ending the participants broke up the lines with frequent pauses thus with staccato effect also in their reading, which "could result in a change of meaning".

Factors that Influence the Phonological Features of Child Development Workers

After careful examination of results based on findings, there are factors which may have influenced the phonological features of child development workers. The influence of the mother tongue (L1) as mentioned by many authors. Since Philippines is characterized by various languages all over the archipelago, Tayao [7] sees the use of sociolectal framework as a more strategic method in illustrating the phonological features of PE because each lectal group has its own characteristic which supersedes differences in the speakers' mother tongue. Another factor that had possibly affected the participants' phonological feature is their exposure to the language and usage since majority of the participants uses English only at work and when they attend meetings and conferences at school. Some of the participants were exposed to English language through listening to English songs, watching news and reading materials written in English.

> "*We only hear the English language through watching television or listening to radio. Sometimes we also read English words in books or in the office*". [P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P15, P16, P18, P20, P21, P22, P25, P26, P27, P30, P31, P34, P35]

Possible Intervention Program stemming from the Results of the Study

Based on the results, since there are features which do not conform with the GAE standard, which teachers use in the academic setting, there is a need to strengthen the awareness of the child development workers in phonological sounds of American English so the conduct of seminars on phonology is essential to the participants for them to be aware of the different sounds of English. Moreover, since we consider the importance of child development workers in the language development of the learners, the development of instructional materials such as recordings and videos on phonology could also strengthen and improve the teaching of sounds to children. Furthermore, the support of the Local Government Units and other stakeholders is also needed in providing audio-visual materials for the enhancement of the teaching and learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

This study tried to describe the phonological aspects of child development workers in two municipalities in a *Karay-a* speaking area. The findings demonstrate the variety of segmental and supra-segmental elements of Philippine English. The absence and substitution of sounds in PhE is one of the reasons why the standard sound varies. It demonstrated that these qualities can be influenced by both the first language, as there is apparent interference from mother tongue phonological features, and the social aspects of

life, such as occupation and social group. Exposure to the language might also influence one's familiarity with the typical sounds in various terms. To better explore the field of phonology, particularly in the provinces where *Kinaray-a* is spoken, more linguists and language instructors are needed. This may contribute to a reduction in the stigma and discrimination against those who are unable to create sounds in a way that complies with the GAE norm, leading to a greater acceptance of the various varieties of phonology.

This qualitative inquiry explored the Philippine English phonological features of child development workers in the selected municipalities in Antique, Philippines. The participants were requested to read aloud a list which contains words and expressions that make use of critical segmental and supra-segmental features. The process was recorded, transcribed and documents were analyzed. Also, pedagogical implications were offered to address the need in the teaching of English phonology. However, this study did not perceive to offer an over-all generalization with regards to the variety of English spoken in the province since the potential sound units present in the words and phrases served as the limiting factor in the quest for profound conclusions from the gathered data.

This paper provided useful insights into the distinct phonological characteristics of child development workers. It examined the phonetic patterns, stress, and intonation of child development providers to demonstrate how these characteristics allow good contact with young children, hence improving their language development and social engagement. Understanding these phonological features can help educators build training programs, improve communication tactics, and ultimately lead to better developmental outcomes for children in childcare settings. Since the research is limited to two municipalities within the province, the researcher suggests expanding the locale to other municipalities within the province or even extend to other provinces exploring the same topic to support or refute the results and findings of this study.

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