CONTRASTIVE PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SINGLISH ON SELECTED YOUTUBE VIDEOS

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Abstract: The present study is intended to investigate the contrasting phonological features of Singlish with the specific aim of finding out how the pronunciation of vowels in Singlish differs from Standard English and the potential factors influencing the Singlish vowel pronunciation. Five YouTube videos containing 19 targeted words uttered by three Singlish speakers became the data source. The auditory analysis method was used to find distinctive vowels between Singlish and Standard English. The descriptive qualitative method was then used to determine the factors influencing the Singlish phonological differences. The results show that Singlish speakers tended to change the /ə/ to /ɜː/, not be able to distinguish the /ə/ and /e/ and have no rules in long and short vowel systems. All these differences are likely a result of contact language situations in Singapore that has been in place for years.

Keywords: Singlish, phonological features, contact language, vowel shifting

INTRODUCTION

Solicitude to Singapore English has been increasingly appealing to linguists, so studies on Singapore English have been extensively conducted. Some studies have focused on the phonological features in Singapore English (SgE). For example, Deterding (2005, 2007) argues that vowels in SgE are excessively distinct from Standard English (SE). With the specific mention of vowels in *egg, beg, peg*, and *vague*, his study pointed out that the vowel of the *egg* was in the same rhyme as *vague*. In contrast, studies on other varieties of English revealed that *egg* was closer to *peg* and *beg* and not *vague*.

Concerning SgE and SE, studies on contrasting phonological features have stimulated continuous scientific debates among scholars. Although, according to Aarts (1982), research on contrastive linguistics was first carried out in 1941 by Benjamin Whorf and then in 1945 by Charles Fries, it continues to this day. Contrastive linguistics can still be developed today because language develops dynamically, and using contrastive linguistics analysis is one way to see the dynamic development of the language itself. Furthermore, when investigating languages that are socio-culturally linked, researchers use contrastive analysis for practical purposes to achieve potential results (Gast, 2012).

Singapore is a Southeast Asian nation where English is the second language. It is reported that Singapore society is highly ethnically diverse, with three main ethnic languages: Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil (Wong, 2014). English is used as a lingua franca bridging the communication barriers among Singapore's ethnic groups, which consist of 77% of Chinese, 14% Malay, and 8% Indian communities (Harada, 2009). English has proliferated because Singapore was once colonized by the British, and English is used as the language of unity to unify various ethnic groups in Singapore and the world (Wong, 2014). Therefore, even though Singapore has four official languages, English is used more widely and intensively in Government administration, education, and other formal situations (Harada, 2009), with the other three

languages playing a role as 'mother-tongues' (Leimgruber, 2013).

Although English has been an inseparable part of Singapore's everyday repertoire, SgE is somewhat different from British English (Starr, 2019; Deterding, 2005, 2007). Deterding (2007) further argues that using British English as the basis for the description of Singapore English is problematic, even though British English can provide enough foundation to represent SgE. The discrepancy between English brought by the British government to Singapore in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is significantly different from the Standard Southern British English today (Starr, 2019).

Suppose we look back at Singapore's history; according to Tan (2012), the development of the Singaporean language varied from the context of colony exploitation. It is not merely an argument but has been proven by existing historical records. Kachru and Nelson (2006) assert that English in all Southeast Asian countries except Thailand results from colonialism. Furthermore, apart from being a British Colony expansion country, Singapore is a country that welcomes many immigrants, mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Southern Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, and southern India. This migration situation occurred continuously until the 1950s, resulting in the contact language situation among different groups of migrant workers and making Singapore a densely multilingual country. To put it differently, this situation has led to language contact from several ethnic groups entering Singapore, in which the development of SgE as a lingua franca cannot be neglected (Bao, 2015).

From this long history, of course, the system of language and culture has also become more expansive. According to Bloom's study (in Wee, 2008), the arrival of England created a Capitan system in which each community group had its legal jurisdiction. This system divides members of the society into three main groups: Malays, Chinese, and Indians. It also considers many other ethnic groups who live in Singapore, including Eurasians and Europeans. The system that has survived today is reflected in its multi-racism policy and how Singapore provides its language policy.

Having four official languages (English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil) and various ethnicities, Singapore English emerged as part of a new variety. According to Gupta's study (in Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006), Singapore English is influenced by the primary and secondary substrate. The main substrates are Baba Melayu (from the China Strait) and Malay Bazaar. Then, the secondary substrate is southern Chinese, especially Cantonese and Hokkien. The same sentiment is echoed by Tan (2012), stating that Singapore Colloquial English is a daily language that is an informal type of language, and the surrounding languages influence variations of colloquial English.

Given that Singapore is a multicultural country, it becomes more convincing to hypothesize that SgE results from contact situations among various ethnic groups (Harada, 2009; Wong, 2014; Gut, 2007). As far as contact language situation is concerned, Ludwig et al. (2018) argue that the social ecology, culture, and environment are more significant in shaping language use than the grammatical rules of the languages. This argument is also reinforced by Wheeler (2015) that contact language occurs because of the interaction between communities and will affect the language rules that exist in the area. He further states that the consequence of this situation is that the language will also change when a community changes.

As aforementioned, Kim (2021) argues that SgE is closely related to language contact between local languages, especially Chinese languages (Hokkien, Cantonese, and Teochow), which significantly influences the emergence of new variations of English in Singapore. Moreover, the Chinese ethnic group is the largest population in this country. According to data from the Department of Statistics, Ministry of Trade & Industry, Republic of Singapore (*Population Trends*, 2021), the Chinese population will reach 74.2%, Malays 13.7%, Indians 8.9%, and others 2.3% by June 2021. Furthermore, Bao (2015) asserts that SgE has also been in constant contact with local languages existing in Singapore, thus resulting in the emergence of a specific variety of English. In line with Bao's statements, Deterding (2005) found evidence from his research on vowels in SgE through the investigation of vowels in *egg, bed, dead, vague,*

made, beg, peg, fed, and *bread*, with those emerging vowels existing in the present day of Singapore even though more and more Singaporeans have been developing native-like pronunciations of English. Similarly, the monophthong vowel system in Singapore differs from the vowel system in SE. For example, the vowel /a/ in SgE is a central open vowel while it is a front open vowel in SE. This difference does not appear only in the vowel /a/ but also in /æ/. In his further study, Deterding (2007) found that the SE *began* /bɪ'gæn/ has the same vowel with *plan* /plæn/, but in SgE, some speakers pronounce *began* /bɪ'gæn/ the same way with *regain* /rɪ'geɪn/.

The distinction between SgE and SE has attracted scholarly attention. More interestingly, like in other English-speaking countries, SgE has more than one variety: Singapore Standard English and Singapore Colloquial English or Singlish (Wong, 2014). These varieties have different functions in everyday communication, with Singapore Standard English or SSE generally spoken in government, education, or other formal and social settings in Singapore. At the same time, Singlish or Singapore Colloquial English (SCE) is used more in informal settings (Bao, 2015).

The difference is not only found in the function of its use. SSE and SCE are also linguistically different, with the SSE being quite similar to Standard British English (Alsagoff, 1998), which is inversely proportional to Singlish or SCE. In Singlish or SCE, there are linguistic differences such as at the level of grammar (Alsagoff, 1998), vocabulary (Harada, 2009), lexicon, semantics, syntax, and phonology (Leimgruber, 2013) & (Li, 2021). Concerning Kim's statement (2021), the lexical difference in Singlish is a consequence of the combination of Chinese and English. The same result was found in Leimgruber's study (2013) that Chinese has a powerful impact with a significant influence from Malay in Singlish.

In a more specific finding, Leimgruber (2013) asserts that at the vocabulary level, Singlish uses several loan words from Malay and Chinese (Hokkien), such as *roti, stuff, eat, fool, angmoh, shiok, kiasu, jia lat, etc.* The use of discourse particle *–lah* can also frequently be found in Singlish, with other variations such as *-ah*, *-leh*, what, *lor*, *hah*, *leh*, *meh*, *mah*, etc. (Li, 2021); (Leimgruber, 2016). At the syntactic level, Singlish has specific characteristics such as mixed codes, the use of 'not' after the modal verb must, and eliminating subject, object, and preposition (Li, 2021). For example, the mixed code we can find in (Li, 2021) work is '*yong tea wash it off lah*.' Another interesting data of Singlish is that they say '*Also can do*' for *'I can also do*' (Alsagoff, 1998). Finally, at the phonology level, (Li, 2021) found that some loan words taken from Chinese are pronounced according to the original pronunciation.

Other studies at the phonology level have also been carried out. For example, Tay (1982) analyzed phonology from rhythm and intonation to analysis of vowels and consonants in educated Singapore English. A few years later, research on Singapore English phonology was also carried out by Hung (1996), that carefully explained the phonology contained in Singapore English. One of the results of this research is in the vowel system. *For example, bit* and *beat* in Singapore English, both words use the same vowel /i/. The results of the phonological research on Colloquial Singapore English were then elaborated on by Wee (2008).

While many influential studies compared SSE and SCE across different linguistic levels, several other studies have focused solely on one linguistic level. Apart from studies conducted by Deterding (2005, 2007) which involved 38 trainee teachers and 41 students from the BA program NIE Singapore, another exploration of phonological characteristics of SgE was also conducted by Redzwan (2017), in which he analyzed the vowel DRESS and TRAP that emerged in Brunei and SgE using 30 recorded data of students from University Brunei Darussalam Corpus of Spoken Brunei English and 30 recorded data from the National Institute of Education Corpus of Spoken Singapore English. In addition, Geraldine & Ee-Ling (2021) examined the labiodental /r/ from educated speakers as they aim to analyze the presence of labiodental /r/ in Singapore's educated speakers' speeches.

This current study focused on looking carefully at the vowel characteristics in Singlish or SCE to enrich the findings of these previous works. However, it is certainly not the first research that investigated the linguistic features of Singlish. As previously discussed, extensive studies on Singlish with various concerns have been in place, such as

Leimgruber's project (2016) on the use of the particle *Bah* in SgE, Branan & New's study (2021) on the pronominal null in Singlish, Wong's research (2021) on the cultural factors that affect Singapore Colloquial English, and Deterding (2007) and Hung (1996) on vowels in Singlish. The present study is, therefore, intended to investigate how the vowels in Singlish are today, whether they are different from previous studies or experiencing consistency as previously found. Furthermore, this current study explored the contrasting phonological features of Singlish, especially on its vowels, by primarily referring to the work of Deterding (2005, 2007) as a significant reference. More specifically, the present study aims to answer the following question, "How do the pronunciation of vowels of Singlish differ from Standard English? And what are the potential factors influencing the Singlish vowel pronunciation?

METHOD

The researchers collected the data from five YouTube videos on three different channels:

a. *Foreigner Learns How to Speak with Singaporean Accent - Georgia Caney Channel*
b. *American & Australian Learns How to Speak with Singaporean Accent for The First-World Friends Channel*
c. *British Learns to Speak Singlish. - Georgia Caney Channel*
d. *US vs. Australia vs. Singapore vs. South Africa ENGLISH Differences - World Friends Channel*
e. *Learning Singlish (Singaporean English) - Click Network.*

The videos from the channels above show how a Singaporean teaches how to speak English using the Singlish accent. We took the data randomly, intending to know how Singlish is currently developed among young Singaporeans. In doing so, we realized that we could not infer that this happens to all young people in Singapore but at least shows a small portion of younger Singaporeans using their Singlish. It is also intended to see how vowels are produced when young Singaporeans speak up spontaneously.

In the five YouTube videos selected, there were three different speakers: one male and two female Singaporean teachings on how to speak Singapore Colloquial English (SCE) or Singlish accent. The male speaker graduated from the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), one of the female speakers graduated from Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and the last speaker did not mention her educational background.

The researchers then elicited 19 words from the five videos: *aunty, father, mother, weather, the, food, eat, doctor, lighter, water, park, car, art, three, walk, find, act, computer*, and *banana*. The words were categorized as follows:

a. Words ending with rhoticity /r/: *father, mother, weather, doctor, lighter, water, car,* and *computer*.
b. Words ending with a consonant other than /r/: *food, park, find, walk*.
c. Words ending with a vowel: *the, three, banana*.
d. Words starting with a vowel: *aunty, eat, art, act*.

The data collected were analyzed auditorily. We used our listening skills to highlight the differences in each vowel and contrasted them with the ones in the Standard British English in the current *Oxford Leaner's Dictionary*. A descriptive qualitative technique was then used to compare the results of the previous and current studies to answer the second research question.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, there is an inclination in SgE to have the same rhymes in the words that in Standard English does not show. For example, *egg* has the same rhymes with *vague* (Deterding, 2005). Surprisingly, this current research also found a big difference between Singlish and SE, especially in the words that contain vowel /ə/, in which one of them shows the shift of vowel /ə/ to /ɜː/, and some other words show that there is no distinction between /ə/ and /e/.

The structure of this section follows the order of the research questions in which we first presented the findings on the prominent phonological features of Singlish and then moved on to discuss the potential underlying factors of such differences.

Prominent phonological features of Singlish

Table 1. The words ending with rhoticity

No	Data (words)	Phonetic Transcription	SE	Singlish
1.	Father	/'fɑːðə(r)/	/ə/	/ɜː/
2.	Mother	/'mʌðə(r)/	/ʌ/	/ə/
			/ə/	/ɜː/
3.	Weather	/'weðə(r)/	/ə/	/ɜː/
4.	Doctor	/'dɒktə(r)/	/ɒ/	/ɔː/
			/ə/	/e/
5.	Lighter	/'laɪtə(r)/	/ə/	/e/
6.	Water	/'wɔːtə(r)/	/ə/	/e/
7.	Computer	/kəm'pjuːtə(r)/	/ə/	/ɜː/
8.	Car	/kɑː(r)/	/ɑː/	/æ/ or /ʌ/ (not clear)

Here we found that the second syllable vowel in *father* and *weather* is audibly clear to change from /ə/ to /ɜː/. However, it does not appear to be the case in the same vowel in mother which shows the change of both vowels from /ʌ/ to /ɑː/ and /ə/ to /ɜː/. Furthermore, in our data, the production of *father*, *weather*, and *mother* shows that Singaporean speakers change the /ə/ and /ɜː/. And what we found here confirmed Deterding's study (2005) that Singaporean speakers do not distinguish the vowels in *bet* and *bat*, resulting in a merger of /ə/ and /æ/ into /ɛ/.

However, different things happened to the words *doctor, lighter,* and *water* in which the vowel /ə/ is closer to /e/, and often there is no distinction between /ə/ and /e/. This situation encouraged us to see the types of consonants before the vowel /ə/ to find the reason. Having contrasted all words with the final /r/, we found that *father, mother,* and *weather* are all preceded by /ð/, while the target vowel in doctor, lighter, and water is preceded by consonant /t/. According to Bao' study in (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006) that before the vowel, /θ/ becomes /t/ and /ð/ becomes /d/. It could allow for a shift in the pronunciation of vowels. This assumption receives support from Andersson's work (2018), which underlines that the quality of vowels and consonants depends greatly on each other. However, we cannot conclude that the influence of consonantal behavior on the vowels in Singlish because it does not appear to be the case in the word *computer*, in which the /ɜː/ appears stronger than /e/ as in *father, mother*, and *weather* even though there is /t/ before /ə/.

Furthermore, on the ending with rhoticity, two words have different results: *computer* and *car*. As shown in table 1, the word computer has different results from words containing the consonant /t/ as described previously. But, then, in the word *car*, we were a little confused about the vowels spoken by the speaker. It is because the speaker's intonation is so fast that the vowels we hear are not clear enough, which makes us confused about whether the speaker pronounces the vowels of the word car using /ɑː/, /ʌ/, or /æ/.

Table 2. Words ending with consonants other than /r/

No	Data (Words)	Phonetic Transcription	SE	Singlish
1.	Food	/fuːd/	/uː/	/ʊ/
2.	Park	/pɑːk/	/ɑː/	/ʌ/
3.	Walk	/ wɔːk /	/ɔː/	/ɒ/

In Table 2, which contains data for words ending with consonants other than /r/, we found that speakers tended not to pay attention to vowel lengths. It can be seen that in *food*, the speakers have /ʊ/ in their Singlish pronunciation, while in SE, the word *food* has /uː/. It is similar to the previous research by Hung (1996), where he found that in vowel pairs of *bit beat, bet bat, foot food,* and *cot*, there is no distinction between them even in their formant frequencies or duration. The other interesting finding is the contrast between /ʊ/ and /uː/ as underlined by Deterding (2003), in which he maintained that /uː/ is a back vowel in SgE. However, as we found in our study, the /ʊ/ and /uː/ cannot be distinguished.

In addition to the word food, the same result is seen in the words *park* and *walk*, in which the speaker also speaks these two words without paying attention to the long and short vowels. Interestingly, in the word *walk*, in the process of analyzing this word, it almost has the same pronunciation as the word *wok* /wɒk/.

Table 3. Words that start with a vowel

No	Data (Words)	Phonetic Transcription	SE	Singlish
1.	Aunty	/'ɑːnti/	/ɑː/	/ʌ/
			/i/	/iː/
2.	Eat	/iːt/	/iː/	/ɪ/
3.	Art	/ɑːt/	/ɑː/	/ʌ/
4.	Act	/ækt/	/æ/	/æ/

The same situation is shown in *aunty, eat,* and *art*, which seems to be another piece of evidence supporting the argument that Singaporean speakers tend to ignore long and short vowels. The word *act*, however, surprisingly still has the same pronunciation as standard English as in Table 3.

From Table 2 and Table 3, we might assume that the speaker we analyzed is hard to distinguish the vowel length. Presumably, Singlish is a colloquial variety that does not need to comply with a standard phonological rule.

Table 4. Words ending with a vowel

No	Data (Words)	Phonetic Transcription	SE	Singlish
1.	The	/ðə/	/ə/	/ə/
2.	Three	/θriː/	/iː/	/iː/
3.	Banana	/bə'nɑːnə/	/ɑː/	/ɑː/
			/ə/	/ə/

This present study also found that *the, three,* and *banana* were pronounced precisely the same as the standard English ones. This finding echoed the study of Deterding (2005) that the phonological features in Singapore English are not always in contrast with the standard ones maintained elsewhere (other variety of English). In his research, Deterding (2005) further provided examples such as *tour, pour,* and *sure*, which maintain traditional differences that have been lost in British speakers but still exist in Singapore English.

At the Singlish phonological level, words containing interdental fricatives voiced /ð/indicated that their vowels changed when they had a rhoticity ending. At the same time, the different things happened to words containing alveolar stop voiceless /t/, which was in words preceded by /t/ and ending with /r/ tends to have no rules in the short and long vowel system, which is similar to the Deterding's study (2003). Although there is a word that is not said with the same result as in *computer* /kəm'pjuːtə(r)/, the dominant result remains visible. In another category, some of the words analyzed in this research were pronounced with the same pronunciation as the ones in Standard English. They only differ in the accent they used, whereas the speakers used the Singlish characteristic accent. The distinctive phonological features, especially in the vowels of Singlish, bring us to the second question: the potential factors influencing Singlish pronunciation, which we elaborate on further in the following section.

Probable factors of vowel shifting in Singlish

One of the most prominent factors of vowel differences in Singlish is contact language situations in Singapore. Deterding (2007) maintained that the vowel systems in three different ethnic groups in Singapore, i.e., Chinese, Malay, and Tamil, are slightly different, especially in their monophthongs. Therefore, these vowel system differences are highly likely to influence English in the environment. As such, Deterding's argument raises a belief that there is a mutual relationship between culture and language. Wong (2021) argues that language cannot appear in an area that does not have a culture because language is closely related to the cultural context in which the language is used. Moreover, Kalaivanan et al. (2021) state that all ethnic-specific prosodic features can be linked back to the speakers' vernacular, either explicitly or implicitly, and this is often an understated premise in the area of prosodic research – where more conclusive research on ethnic differentiation in SgE is presented. So indeed, we cannot separate language and culture. When we talk about Singlish and its linguistic features, the role of regional languages and culture that develops in Singapore affects the existence of Singlish itself. It is why some of the phonological features shown by Singlish are different from SE because, in its formation and usage, several words and features of the ethnic language in Singapore have entered and developed as Singlish.

As widely known, the contact language situations in Singlish do not only employ Chinese but also Malay and Tamil. More specifically, Ng (2019) maintained that Singlish is a contact variety highly affected by local languages, particularly Southern Mid Chinese and Malay. In one of the five videos we

observed entitled *British Learns to Speak Singlish*, we found that the word *kena* originated from Malay and is also used. The existence of Malaya vocabulary items in Singlish has given rise to the influence of phonological features of Malay too, though the more significant influence of Chinese still cannot be neglected as the Chinese population has rapidly increased for decades in Singapore.

The Chinese phonological influence in the shift of vowels in Singlish is also indicated by our data, particularly in how tone is imposed in word production – given that Standard English is not a tonal language. In the word father, for example, we found not only the changes in pronunciation from /ə/ to /ɜː/but also that the vowel /ə/ is
a lot longer, showing the influence of the Chinese language. The effect is noticeable in *the, three,* and *banana* characterizing the Singlish pronunciation. Wong (2021) interestingly pinpointed that the Chinese words will lose their tone when they are entered into English. However, it does not appear to be the case in Singlish, where the tones are still maintained.

Low (2019) states that there is a mixture of culture and hybridity in the language where different ethnic groups in Singapore have used English extensively for communication, which has given rise to a local variation called Singlish. Some other prominent studies, such as Bao (2015), Branan and New (2021), Kim (2021), and Leimgruber (2013), also maintained that Singlish or Colloquial Singapore English emerged as the result of the contact language situation in Singapore.

From the previous studies mentioned earlier, we can assume that there is a high possibility that the contact language causes the changes in vowels in Singlish. One of the recent studies on phonological features that can change under contact language has been done previously in the Sino-Russian language conducted by Frajzyngier et al. (2021). They believe that in contact language situations, Chinese speakers emphasize their phonemic system when communicating in Russian. They continue that it was also found that there were differences in the place of articulation in Sino-Russian Idiolects. Whereas Sino-Russian is only in contact with two languages, Chinese and Russian, they still have differences at the phonological level even though these differences do not shift the vowels or consonants in Russian as in Singlish.

The same situation happened in the research by Frajzyngier et al. (2021) that the vowel shifting contained in Singlish occurs under the supervision of the contact language, mainly because Singapore is a multilingual and multicultural country. In other words, a country with more than one ethnicity cannot ignore the influence of language contact on its linguistic situations.

The above argument is also supported by the study of Kalaivanan et al. (2021) that the way we acquire sounds in a language is likely to be influenced by language transfer and exposure. So, it is true that Singlish is the result of a contact language that has occurred over the years and is also one factor that influences the differences in Singlish linguistics features, in this case, phonological features.

The state of language contact, which ultimately influences changing the phonological features of a language, is possible to occur, especially since Singapore has four languages at once. Moreover, the languages of various ethnicities in Singapore have been friction over the years, and indeed, language mixing and adoption of its features are possible.

Viewing the comparison between the Sino-Russian idiolect and Singlish, we think that the situation between these two languages is very different in the environment in which the languages develop. Sino-Russian develops in two languages that are in contact with each other (Frajzyngier et al., 2021), while Singlish develops where four languages are in contact with each other. Thus, the situation of Singlish language contact is more complicated than Sino-Russian.

As stated by Ziegeler (2021), the influence of the substrate language on Singlish is still one of the critical factors in its use today. However, the influence of Southern Chinese has dramatically diminished. She argues that the contact language in Singapore appears to be complex, which features the diglossic environment where the *High* and *Low* varieties in this country intertwine. Furthermore, there is also presupposed contact between sub-varieties of English, for example, between SSE and Singlish.

This explanation strengthens the argument that contact language cannot be

ignored when looking for causes of changing linguistic features in Singlish. Moreover, several studies have found that Singlish results from this contact language (Bao, 2015; Branan & New, 2021; Kim, 2021; Leimgruber, 2013). Singlish appears to maintain its consistency and existence by adopting the features from other languages and making it a Singlish characteristic, which has been occurring over the years. Therefore, ignoring the contact language factor has no power in changing the linguistic features in a language, especially in Singlish.

CONCLUSION

The present research has shown that in the category of words ending with /r/, such as *father, mother,* and *weather*, the vowel /ə/ changed to /ɜ:/, but in *doctor, lighte*r, and *water*, the vowel changed from /ə/ to /e/. Based on the results, we argue that it is likely because of the consonant before the vowel /ə/. However, it is not always the case in all Singlish vowel pronunciations. So, further studies need to be in place to explore the linguistic motivation of these pronunciation differences. As such, Singlish has no rules with long and short vowels. Even /ʊ/ and /u:/ could not be distinguished in Singlish, while those two were pronounced differently in Standard English (Deterding, 2003).

Supporting previous studies, the vowel changes in Singlish because of the influence of other languages in the highly dynamic contact language situations in Singapore have been going on for years. In addition, although some ethnic languages exist in Singapore, those languages are no longer the same as the ones in the colonial era. However, their influence can still be found nowadays, especially with the effects of Southern Chinese language use. In this case, the contact language situation changes some linguistic features, especially the vowels, as indicated in this current study.

It should be noted that the present study contributes to the body of research concerning vowel shifting and phonological features that happen in Singapore Colloquial English (Singlish). In addition, this study provides evidence supporting the existence of long and short vowels, as was previously conveyed in Deterding's study (2003). However, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine phonetic features other than vowels in Singlish, even though our findings partly indicate the role of consonants in affecting vowels which future research could address.

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