

## NICKI MINAJ'S LINKING SOUND PATTERN ANALYSIS THROUGH THE SONG LYRIC "SUPER BASS"

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### **Abstrak**

*Penutur asli Bahasa Inggris menerapkan penghubung bunyi secara natural. Meskipun demikian, mempelajari penghubung bunyi dengan benar dapat menghasilkan pengucapan Bahasa Inggris yang terdengar lebih jelas dan lancar. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori utama fonetik dan fonologi yang dikemukakan oleh Mc. Mahon, Collin dan Mess. Teori utama ini juga didukung oleh Alfabet Fonetik Internasional dan Teori mengenai macam – macam pola penghubung bunyi yang dikemukakan oleh Mc. Mahon dan Ghinwa Alameen. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menjelaskan proses fonologi yang terjadi didalamnya. Untuk menjalankan penelitian ini, sebuah lagu berbahasa inggris yang berjudul "Super Bass" ditetapkan sebagai objek penelitian. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 31 data yang mengandung pola penghubung bunyi dan proses fonologi. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat dijadikan sebagai panduan dalam memahami perbedaan bunyi yang di ucapkan antara penutur asli dan proses fonologi yang terjadi pola penghubung bunyi.*

**Kata Kunci:** Pola Penghubung Bunyi, Fonetik, Proses Fonologi.

### **Abstract**

*All native speakers of English do linking naturally. Hence, learning linking of words correctly can result significantly more fluid and fluent sounding English speech. This research used the main theory of phonetics and phonology proposed by Mc Mahon, Collin and Mees. The main theories have been supported by International Phonetics Alphabet and types of linking theory proposed by Mc. Mahon and Ghinwa Alameen. Therefore, this study aimed to identify and to describe the phonological processes occurred through it. To conduct this study, an English rap song titled Super Bass was chosen as the object. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative. The findings had shown that there were 31 data of the application of linking sound pattern and its phonological process. The result of this study was expected to be a guideline in comprehending the differences of the sound that uttered by Native Speaker and the phonological processes that occurred through the linking sound pattern.*

**Keywords:** Linking Sound Pattern, Phonetics, Phonological Processes.

## INTRODUCTION

Linking is very important in English language and if we use it, people will easily understand about what we are saying. Ghinwa (2007:2) asserts that linking is the merging of multiple words together until they sound as if they are only one word. Otherwise, native speakers of English all do this naturally. When people speak naturally, they do not pronounce a word, and stop, then say the next word in the sentence, but, they speak complete sentence. Hence, learning linking of words correctly can result in significantly more fluid and fluent sounding English speech. She also states that the term of linking used in two difference ways that is a connected speech phenomena and modification. These are the changes that a word undergoes in running speech when combined with other words. A variant of International Phonetic Alphabet is used for the transcription, where [ ͡ ] represents a link between two sounds,

To enrich the understanding about the topic, the data were focused on the changes of pattern of the sound and form of linking sound by using the theory of phonological studies especially in phonological processes. Hence, the formulated problem in this research was how the linking sound patterns found in Nicki Minaj's are formed? According to the problem formulations, the objectives in this study are to identify and to describe the patterns of linking sound of Nicki Minaj's song lyric "Super Bass".

Two sub-disciplines in linguistics related to the sound are phonetics and phonology. Either phonetics or phonology, they describe and analyze speech from different perspective. Phonetics provides objectives ways of describing and analyzing the range of the sounds of human used in their language. In addition, articulatory phonetics identifies precisely which speech organs and muscles are involved in producing the different sounds of the world's language (McMahon, 2001:1). Concurrently, phonology is the further study of the spoken of language, this study is about the system which is underlying the language itself. Phonology deals with the speakers' knowledge of the sound system of a language. It is therefore exclusively concerned with language or competence. (McMahon, 2001:5)

The relation between phonetics and phonology is complex. However, it might initially approach phonology as narrowed – down phonetics. Phonetics provides the data for describing speech and phonology generalize from the speech so as to produce the data deeper insight into the structures and patterns of language sound systems. (Collins & Mees, 2003:76).

Therefore, in this research, the theories are used to explain the production of a sound resulted by the changing of the linking sound pattern that takes a process in producing a certain sound. Hence, this study only explains the data into the surface structure of phonology by analyzing the changes of linking sound and its processes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Type of the Research**

This study began with a general theoretical orientation and a method of a study. Data were analyzed by focusing on the sound that produced a linking sound and describing into descriptive analysis. According to Creswell (2014:5), qualitative research is an approach for understanding and exploring the meaning of individuals or group ascribe to a social or human problem (Herman, 2016). Meanwhile, Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020: 10) stated that qualitative research is an approach that allows the researchers to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in content analysis (Sinurat and Herman, 2019). Hence, this research used a content analysis and narrative approach to serve the data.

Furthermore, this study would serve data about linking sound phenomena by classifying technique. Data used phonological theory of phonological process, and phonetics and phonology to explain more understandable. Findings will be written in phonetic transcription.

### **Subject of the Research**

The subject of this research was a music that taken from *A Pink Friday* album by Nicki Minaj song entitled "Super Bass". Music has become a media for self – expression for any directions these days and in understanding the lyrics, different language influences were formed into individual linguistic repertoires. Since August 13, 2011, 'Super Bass' is ranked as top 3 by Billboard Chart Beat. This song was released on April 5, 2011 and co – written by Minaj, along with Ester Dean, Roahn Hylton, and Kane Beatz. This song has a genre called pop rap. This research focuses on the changes form of the linking caused by phonological processes that occurred while pronouncing the lyrics of the song.

### **Data Collection**

To collect the data, there were several steps conducted in this research. To illustrate, the steps including direct observation was done by watching the videos

both online and offline then taking some important notes and the original video was downloaded from youtube.com as offline video to make the process of lyrics analysis easier to do. Thereafter, the video was played more than once because the genre of the song is pop rap since almost of the lyrics are using linking and to make sure there are no lyrics left behind. To ensure that the lyrics yield the linking sound phenomena, the whole lyrics were listened and analyzed meticulously. In classifying process, data were listed into tabulation. It is based on each linking sound version of both covering version and original version. There are 43 stanzas in total divided into 9 verses and 1 refrain. The aim of this process was to present the data by its types of linking sound and the phonetics transcription.

### **Data Analysis**

Data tabulation was analyzed to ensure the data transcribed into the phonetic transcriptions. The process consisted of previewing the data in the phonetics transcription, analyzing the phonetics transcription words by words, phrase by phrase, and sentences by sentences according to the types of linking sound. Concurrently, the lyric and each of phonetic transcription had been re-checked twice to ensure the validity. Thereafter, the results were collected and sorted based on the linking sound phenomena and the forming. Hence, 37 stanzas of the data explained in detail. It was due to show not only the varieties of linking sound phenomena, but also the process in the types of linking sound.

### **FINDINGS**

An original version of this song had varieties of phonological processes that resulted from the analyzed the types of linking. Those phonological processes were occurred by analyzing the word / phrase and or even sentences of the lyrics which had contained an extra sound or the sound of the word had moved even elided. The varieties of phonological processes in nicki minaj's version such as liaison, elision, deletion, insertion, and aphaeresis.

In this version, consonant to vowel (c – v) linking, vowel to vowel (v – v) linking, and consonant to consonant (c – c) linking were formed by liaison, elision, deletion, and aphaeresis. Meanwhile, the phonological process of insertion was mostly found through the vowel to vowel linking. Those phonological processes were described as follows:

## 1. Liaison

Mostly, the example of liaison was located in specific term such as rhotic ‘r’ and non – rhotic accent in English language. However, according to the definition of liaison through nicki minaj’s original were found some extra sound through the lyrics. Those sounds were explained as follows:

### a) Liaison of /m/ sound.

The extra sound of /m/ was added through the part of the lyric ‘come up’. It had not written through the phonetic transcriptions. However, the sound of /m/ was articulated clearly when it following the next word of vowel sound /ʌ/.

| <b>AmE<br/>Dictionary</b>  | <b>Minaj’s Version</b>      | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Come up<br><i>/kʌm ʌp/</i> | cam_ ap<br><i>/kʌm_ ʌp/</i> | <b>C – V</b>            |

Table 1. Nicki Minaj’s Liaison Process

### b) Liaison of /l/ sound.

The sound of /ə/ had changed into /a/ when the sound of /l/ spoken by Nicki Minaj. The additional consonant sound /l/ of the vowel sound of /a/ was clearly pronounced in a sequence.

| <b>AmE<br/>Dictionary</b>  | <b>Minaj’s Version</b>      | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hell of<br><i>/həl əv/</i> | hel_ af<br><i>/həl_ av/</i> | <b>C – V</b>            |

Table 2. Nicki Minaj’s Liaison Process

### c) Liaison of /n/ sound.

The extra sound of /n/ was not written through the phonetic transcription, yet it had been clearly pronounced in a sequence through the next word. In this liaison, there were three phrases that occurred which can be seen into following table:

| <b>AmE Dictionary</b>                | <b>Minaj's Version</b>                     | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| One is for<br>/wʌn ɪz fəʔ/           | Wan <u>i</u> sfo<br>/wʌn ɪz fəʔ/           | <b>C – V</b>            |
| Runnin' away<br>/rʌn.ɪŋ ə 'weɪ/      | Runnin <u>a</u> way<br>/rʌn.m ə 'weɪ/      | <b>C – V</b>            |
| Sickenin' eyes<br>/ 'sɪk. ən.ɪŋ aɪz/ | sickenin <u>e</u> yes<br>/ 'sɪk. ən.m aɪz/ | <b>C – V</b>            |

Table 3. Nicki Minaj's Liaison Process

## d) Liaison of /r/ sound.

The extra sound of /r/ had added through the pronunciation of the phrase “you're a” in the lyrics. There was a change of the sound when the extra sound of /r/ was pronounced. The sound of /ə/ in the original phonetic transcription was changed into /ʌ/ sound.

| <b>AmE Dictionary</b> | <b>Minaj's Version</b>   | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| You're a<br>/jʊr ə/   | your <u>a</u><br>/jʊr ʌ/ | <b>C – V</b>            |

Table 4. Nicki Minaj's Liaison Process

## e) Liaison of /z/ sound.

The term liaison was almost similar with the term of insertion. Liaison had an extra sound only by adding into the pronunciation, meanwhile insertion was an extra sound that either pronounced or written. However, in this kind of phonological processes the sound of /z/ did not change the pattern of the linking as consonant to vowel linking.

| <b>AmE Dictionary</b> | <b>Minaj's Version</b>      | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Boys in<br>/bɔɪz m/   | Boys <u>i</u> n<br>/bɔɪz m/ | <b>C – V</b>            |

Table 5. Nicki Minaj's Liaison Process

## 2. Elision

If the term of liaison was an extra sound to facilitate the articulation of a sequence, the term elision was a converse to it. Elision was a term and process of phoneme that is said to be elided. This type of phonological processes is also part of deletion. In this original version, there were several sounds of the phoneme that had to be elided.

| <b>AmE Dictionary</b>         | <b>Minaj's Version</b>                                | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Top down<br>/tɑ:p 'daʊn/      | Tad <sub>u</sub> awn<br>/tɑ:d <sub>u</sub> aʊn/       | C – V                   |
| Like he<br>/laɪk hi/          | laik <sub>u</sub> I<br>/laɪk <sub>u</sub> i/          | C – V                   |
| Pop bottles<br>/pɑ: p bɑ:t l/ | pob <sub>u</sub> ottles<br>/pɑ: b <sub>u</sub> ɑ:t l/ | C – V                   |
| Got that<br>/gɑ:t ðæt/        | god <sub>u</sub> at<br>/gɑ:d <sub>u</sub> æt/         | C – V                   |
| Like him<br>/laɪk m/          | laik <sub>u</sub> iI<br>/laɪk <sub>u</sub> m/         | C – V                   |
| Slapped it<br>/slæpt ɪt/      | Slappe <sub>u</sub> d<br>/slæp <sub>u</sub> d/        | C – C                   |

Table 6. Nicki Minaj's Elision Process

According to the phonetic transcription on Cambridge dictionary (2013: 4th ed), the phrase “top down” should be pronounced as consonant to consonant linking. It happened because the /p/ sound was met with the /d/ sound in a sequence. However, in this original version the sound of /p/ had to be elided and replaced with the /d/sound, so then the phrase “top down” had been pronounced to be /tɑ:d<sub>u</sub> aʊn/ become consonant to vowel linking. It also happened to the phrase “Pop bottles” when the /p/ sound was elided and replaced by /b/ sound that had pronounced in a sequence.

Concurrently, in the other phrase there were two sounds that changed. First, the /t/ sound was fully omitted. Second, the sound of /ð/ had been replaced by /d/ sound. It was happened through the phrase “got that” when it was supposed to be pronounced as consonant to consonant linking. However, due to the sound of /t/ and /ð/ had been changed and replaced to be /d/ sound, hence the phrase “got that” had pronounced to be /gɑ:dæt/ which signed as consonant to vowel linking.

Regarding the form of the linking that changed due to phonological processes, there was a phrase that an inversed form from the other. The basic form of these phrase was “slapped it” which normally pronounced as a consonant to vowel linking because the last sound of /d/ adjoined by sound /i/ through the next word. After the phonological process occurred through it, there were several changes of the phoneme such as the sound /it/ had fully omitted or not pronounced, however the sound of /it/ had been replaced by /d/ sound. Hence, the pronunciation of the phrase “slapped it” became /slæp\_d/.

### 3. Deletion

Nicki Minaj’s version had produced less sound in deletion. There were only two sounds in this original version such as deletion of sound /ŋ/ through the phrase “blazing up” which originally in the lyric had written as “blazin up”, and the deletion of sound /ð/ through the phrase “and the”. Both of these sound was formed as consonant to vowel linking. These forms of phonological process were classified below:

| AmE Dictionary               | Minaj’s Version                                       | Types of Linking |
|------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Blazin’ up<br>/ˈblɛɪ.zɪŋ ʌp/ | blazin <sub>u</sub> up<br>/ˈblɛɪ.zɪm <sub>u</sub> ʌp/ | C – V            |
| And the<br>/ən ðe/           | And <sub>e</sub> e<br>/ænd <sub>e</sub> e/            | C – V            |

Table 7. Nicki Minaj’s Deletion Process

The explanation of these processes had clearly explained according to the term of deletion. For instance, the sound /ŋ/ through the phrase “blazin’ up” had been fully elided and had not to be pronounced. Meanwhile, the sound of / ŋ/ of “blazin’ up” was replaced by /n/ sound that clearly pronounced. Furthermore, the



phoneme /ð/ of “and the” was also fully omitted and replaced by the sound /d/. However, the vowel sound /e/ had been preceded by the sound /d/ so it had pronounced to be /ænd̩e/.

#### 4. Insertion

Insertion was described as a process to insert a phoneme between two syllable word and it had been either pronounced or written into the phonetic transcription. In other word, this process would not change the form of the linking and only facilitate the pronunciation. In this original version, vowel to vowel linking was formed by inserting the phonemes /s/, /w/, /y/, and /z/. Insertion also produced only one sound of consonant to vowel linking. The example of consonant to vowel linking in insertion was the sound /z/ that had inserted through the phrase “His eyes”. The other results of insertion processes were explained, as followed:

| <b>AmE<br/>Dictionary</b> | <b>Minaj's Version</b>                           | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Know I<br>/noʊ aɪ/        | know <sup>w</sup> ai<br>/noʊ <sup>w</sup> aɪ/    | V – V                   |
| You in<br>/jʊ m/          | you <sup>w</sup> in<br>/jʊ <sup>w</sup> m/       | V – V                   |
| Go away<br>/goʊ əˈweɪ/    | go <sup>w</sup> away<br>/goʊ <sup>w</sup> əˈweɪ/ | V – V                   |
| He ill<br>/hi ɪl/         | He <sup>y</sup> ill<br>/hi <sup>y</sup> ɪl/      | V – V                   |
| The air<br>/ðiː eɪ/       | The <sup>y</sup> air<br>/ðiː <sup>y</sup> eɪ/    | V – V                   |
| Shy and<br>/ʃaɪ ən/       | Shy <sup>z</sup> and<br>/ʃaɪ <sup>z</sup> ən/    | V – V                   |

| <b>AmE<br/>Dictionary</b> | <b>Minaj's Version</b>                        | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| See I<br>/si: aɪ/         | See <sup>y</sup> ai<br>/si: <sup>y</sup> aɪ/  | V – V                   |
| I is<br>/aɪ ɪz/           | I <sup>y</sup> is<br>/aɪ <sup>y</sup> ɪz/     | V – V                   |
| Boy you<br>/bɔɪ ju/       | boy <sup>y</sup> you<br>/bɔɪ <sup>y</sup> u/  | V – V                   |
| He ain't<br>/hi emt/      | He <sup>y</sup> ain<br>/hi <sup>y</sup> emt/  | V – V                   |
| His eye<br>/hɪz aɪ/       | His <sup>y</sup> eye<br>/hɪz <sup>y</sup> aɪ/ | C – V                   |

Table 8. Nicki Minaj's Insertion Process

## 5. Aphaeresis

Nicki Minaj's version had produced several sounds of loss initial of the phoneme. A Loss of initial of the phoneme was known as aphaeresis. Mostly, aphaeresis used for those of slang languages such as; ain't, gotta, gonna, gimme and others. The aphaeresis process that resulted from this version was varieties and the formed were commonly occurred on consonant to vowel linking. Those would be explained according to each loss of initial phoneme. Meanwhile, the results could be seen in table:

| <b>AmE<br/>Dictionary</b> | <b>Minaj's Version</b>                         | <b>Types of Linking</b> |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Tell him<br>/tel m/       | tell <sup>y</sup> em<br>/tel <sup>y</sup> em/  | C – V                   |
| Make them<br>/meɪk ðəm/   | make <sup>y</sup> em<br>/meɪk <sup>y</sup> əm/ | C – V                   |
| Gotta<br>/'gɑ: tə/        | Gott <sup>y</sup> a<br>/'gɑ: t <sup>y</sup> ʌ/ | C – V                   |

| AmE<br>Dictionary     | Minaj's Version     | Types of Linking |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Got my<br>/gɑ:t maɪ/  | Gom̩ a<br>/gɑ:m̩ ʌ/ | C – V            |
| Give me<br>/grɪv mi:/ | gimm̩ e<br>/'gm̩.i/ | C – V            |

Table 9. Nicki Minaj's Aphaeresis Process

## a) Aphaeresis of /h/ sound

In this case, the phrase “tell him” through the lyric had lost the /h/ sound in order to make a linking sound through it. The form of the phrase was originally consonant to consonant linking. Due to the linking sound that occurred that became consonant to vowel linking, this phrase was categorized into a slang which pronounced as /teɪ̩m̩/.

## b) Aphaeresis of /ð/ sound

The form of the phrase “make them” had changed directly into informal form caused by losing of /ð/ sound. The loss initial of / ð/ sound also changed the form of the linking from the originally as consonant to consonant linking became a consonant to vowel linking. Hence, it had pronounced as /meɪ̩k̩ əm̩/.

## c) Aphaeresis of /t/ sound

Another example of this loss initial of /t/ sound was come from “got my”. This phrase before it had loss the /t/ sound and replaced by /m/ sound the form of the linking was consonant to consonant linking. Thereafter, the sound /t/ had lost the form of the linking changed into consonant to vowel linking.

## d) Aphaeresis of /v/ sound

This process had commonly seen through the slang language such as the word “give me” pronounced as “gimme”. This change occurred when the sound /v/ had lost and replaced with the /m/ sound. This process not only lost the phoneme but also changed the form of the phrase that originally consonant to consonant linking had changed into consonant to vowel linking. Hence, the pronounced became / gɪm̩.i/

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

The main point of the original version was located in producing the linking by using liaison process. Concurrently, the other cover singer versions were not produced the linking by using this process. Mostly, the example of liaison was located in specific term such as rhotic 'r' and non – rhotic accent in English language. The example was firmly explained that the term liaison was nearly similar to the term of insertion. It was given an additional sound to connect the words. The distinction was located in the additional sound. Liaison was unwritten and replaced other phoneme, meanwhile in the term of insertion the additional sound was written and unreplaced other phonemes..

The results of liaison in an original version were concluded as followed: Liaison of /m/ sound was taken from “come up” /kʌm\_ʌp/. Liaison of /l/ sound was taken from “hell of” /hel\_ʌv/. Liaison of /n/ sound was taken from “runnin’ away” /rʌn.in\_ə'wei/. Liaison of /r/ sound was taken from “you’re a” /jʊr\_ʌ/. Liaison of /z/ sound was taken from “boys in” /bɔɪz\_ʒ m/.

The term of elision was elided the phoneme. For specifically, this process of phonology was part of deletion. According to process, elision was commonly change the form of the linking in which it has changed from the consonant to consonant (C – C) linking to consonant to vowel (C – V) linking. There are several phrases formed by this process that could be found in each version such as: “top down” /tɑ:d\_aʊn/, “pop bottles” /pɑ: b\_ɑ:..tʌl/, and “got that” /gɑ:d\_æt/.

Deletion was the second common process that occurred through all the versions. However, the types of linking that resulted by this process was rarely produced. Both original and conversion was produced at least two or three phrases. For instance, the phrase “slapped it” /slæp\_əd/ only could be found through all cover singer versions. The term of this process was similar through the elision, when it could change the form of the linking even the linking form was unchanged.

Mostly, aphaeresis used for those of slang languages such as; ain't, gotta, gonna, gimme and others. This process also occurred into the consonant to vowel linking formed. The results of this process were concluded based on every version as followed: “tell him” /tel\_em/ had taken from Minaj's version. Meanwhile, Insertion was described as a process to insert a phoneme between two syllable word and it had

been either pronounced or written into the phonetic transcription. Insertion had occurred into the form vowel to vowel (V – V) linking. According to the all versions, there were several sounds that inserted between the phonemes such as: /w/, /y/, /z/ sound. The result of these sound were pronounced alike either in an original version or the cover singer versions. For instance, the phrase “go away” for /goʊˈweɪ/, “shy and” for /ʃaɪən, “his eye” for /hɪzˈaɪ/.

### **Suggestion**

After conducting this study and find out the result, the researchers would like to give suggestion for the future researchers and the readers. The future researchers are suggested to observe a similar study that related to the linking sound pattern especially in a phonological study. Somehow, the linking pattern still has correlation with the vowel change study that can found into the lyric of the song, movie scripts, and direct conversation uttered by native speakers and nonnative speakers. This study is beneficial for a phonology study especially in comprehension since the context can be directly observed by the researchers. Yet this research is expected that the other researchers can find other relation between phonological study and other studies. Additionally, the readers are firmly suggested to wield this research as a guideline for having an ideal comprehension in understanding the sound. Specifically, in terms of phonology, it might be better if the readers are capable to understand the branch of phonology study.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

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