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## The interference of EFL student's native language in students english pronunciation

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### ABSTRACT

The study indicates the interferences occurred by the Kaurnese and Rejangnese students in pronouncing English sounds and the factors that affect pronunciation interference of Kaurnese and Rejangnese students in pronouncing English sounds. The respondents were ten students of the English Education Study Program. They are five Kaurnese students whose L1 is Kaurnese and five Rejangnese students whose L1 is Rejangnese. The researcher applied a qualitative approach and conducted a case study design. The instruments used to collect the data were observation by reading a list of words and interviews about factors affecting students' pronunciation interference. The result of data analysis showed that Kaurnese students had interference in pronouncing 30 sounds while Rejangnese students had interference in pronouncing 22 sounds. The data also showed that three main factors influence students' pronunciation; native language, age, and the difference in language features between English and students' native language. In conclusion, all Kaurnese and Rejangnese students had interference in pronouncing English sounds. Kaurnese language is more interference with English pronunciation than the Rejangnese language. Based on the above context, this study suggests the students practice more English pronunciation and put more attention to the native language interference. The lecturer is expected to be able to help the students to reduce the mispronounced words. The study also suggests that further researchers take special attention to this phenomenon to solve the students' problems with English pronunciation.



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### Introduction

The number of native languages in Indonesia makes Indonesian people have the ability to use more than one language or known as multilingual. Indonesia consists of 34 provinces and every province has various native languages. Based on the current data, there are 718 native languages in Indonesia (Kemdikbud RI, 2020). Some provinces have different native languages in each regency, such as Bengkulu Province. There are approximately eight languages spoken (Kemdikbud RI, 2021). Thus, native languages are used regionally, in addition to the Indonesian language domiciled as the national language and the official language of Indonesia (Abdulhayi, 1985). Hence, in terms of communication, Indonesian people use more than two languages; they are native, Indonesian, and other languages such as English, etc.

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During the English acquisition process, the ability of non-native students or EFL (English as a foreign language) learners will be affected by several things. According to the innatist theory of second language acquisition, children will learn a second language better than adults especially in obtaining the pronunciation of a target language (Chomsky, 2002). This is because the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) will be difficult to function after passing the critical period for language learning. The innatist theory is supported by a critical period hypothesis that states childhood is a time when the language evolves quickly and the learning of language is more difficult and less successful after puberty (Siegler, 2006). The condition of the human brain becomes increasingly rigid and stiff to learn the language as it passes the critical period. In addition, learning English pronunciation seems to be a problem for Indonesian students because since childhood they have become accustomed to speaking in their native language. Selinker (1972) states that when learners use a second language their first language will interfere with the target language. Interference means the transfer of language, this term refers to language learners using their habits and knowledge from the native language to the target language. For this reason, pronunciation is one of the essential skills in learning English. Since pronunciation error will interfere with the understanding of the message and affects the perception of the listener. Students with clear pronunciation tend to communicate more easily in a classroom learning activity, although they have weaknesses in grammar, on the other hand, students with poor pronunciation will find it difficult to interact in the classroom activity even if the grammar is good.

In the same way as the discussion highlighted in this study, the researcher chooses Kaurnese and Rejangnese languages. Since both native languages have unique pronunciations that are completely different from Indonesian and English. Based on questionnaires that recorded students' native languages, the result showed that the Rejangnese language had the highest number of speakers with a total number of 21% (17) out of 81 respondents. On the other hand, approximately 16% (13) respondents were Kaurnese speakers. Hence, there are a lot of speakers in both native languages in the English Department of IAIN Bengkulu. It can be seen from the observation, it was found that the native languages influence the English sound. For example, students often mispronounced certain English words such as 'water'. Both Kaurnese and Rejangnese students tended to substitute sounds [ɔ:] and [ə] into sounds [ʌ] and [e]. As a result, it sounded like /wʌter/ whereas the correct pronunciation is like /wɔ:tə(r)/. Knowing this fact, it is very important to explore this issue. In this study, the interference of students' native language in English pronunciation was examined. The factors which contribute to the results are deduced, so those appropriate solutions can be explored to solve the issue.

## Method

The study used a qualitative case study. A qualitative case study is defined as a detailed examination of an event that the analyst believes exhibits the operation of some identified general theoretical principles (Mitchell, 1983). It seeks to find out the phonological interference occurred by the Kaurnese and Rejangnese students in pronouncing English sounds and the factors that influence it. The data were taken from ten students, they involved five Kaurnese students and five Rejangnese students of the English Education Study Program of State Institute for Islamic Studies Bengkulu. Moreover, in collecting research subjects, the researcher used the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is the process of selecting a sample based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Arikunto, 2006). Hence, the researcher chose students based on several considerations. First, they have passed the Advanced Speaking, Introduction to Linguistics, and Phonetic-phonology courses. Then, they are pure native speakers of both native languages, to ensure they fulfill the requirement, the researcher asked for their identity cards of each of them.

The data were collected from two kinds of instruments, namely observation, and interview. The observation was used by reading a list of words. Then, the interview was used to get the data related to the factors affecting students' pronunciation interference. Both instruments were conducted through Zoom Meeting. Since the current pandemic condition and face-to-face lectures have not been conducted. Furthermore, the observation data were analyzed by using Ellies' learner error analysis (1997) to find pronunciation errors when students pronounce English sounds. The procedures are as follows identifying errors, describing errors, explaining errors, and evaluating errors. After that, the data from observation is counted using the formula from Irianto et al. (2018) and classified using the criteria from Depdikbud (1994). On the other hand, the interview data were analyzed through an interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1994). The steps were collecting, reducing, and displaying the data.

## Results and Discussions

The findings are discussed in two main points concerning the research questions, namely Phonological Interferences Occurred by Kaurnese & Rejangnese students and Factors Affecting Pronunciation Interference of Kaurnese & Rejangnese Students.

### Phonological Interferences Occurred by Kaurnese and Rejangnese Students

Table 1 <The Observation Results>

| Name of Students           | Sound Addition   | Sound Omission      | Sound Replacement  | Frequency |
|----------------------------|--|---------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Kaurnese Students</b>   |  |                     |  |           |
| Respondent 1               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ɹ/, /θ/, /ɜ:/, /p/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /h/ | /ɜ:/, /ɹ/, /θ/, /j/ | /i:/, /I/, /e/, /æ/, /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /p/, /g/, /f/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/, /l/ | 67, 64%   |
| Respondent 2               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ɜ:/, /g/, /ʃ/, /r/                             | /tʃ/, /θ/           | /I/, /e/, /æ/, /ɑ:/, /v/, /ə/, /g/, /f/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/                                  | 55, 88%   |
| Respondent 3               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ʃ/, /ŋ/, /r/                            | -                   | /I/, /v/, /ʊ/, /ə/, /g/, /f/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/   | 50%       |
| Respondent 4               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /r/                                      | /j/                 | /I/, /e/, /v/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/, /f/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/                       | 55, 88%   |
| Respondent 5               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /θ/, /ð/, /r/             | /dʒ/, /h/, /j/      | /I/, /v/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /d/, /f/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /θ/                                       | 64, 70%   |
| <b>Rejangnese Students</b> |  |                     |  |           |
| Respondent 6               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ɜ:/, /r/  | /dʒ/                | /v/, /ə/, /g/, /f/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /θ/   | 35, 29%   |
| Respondent 7               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /r/                                 | /ʒ/, /dʒ/           | /e/, /v/, /ə/, /g/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /ð/  | 41, 17%   |
| Respondent 8               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /r/                                      | /ʒ/, /n/            | /e/, /v/, /ʊ/, /ə/, /g/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/, /ŋ/  | 50%       |
| Respondent 9               | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ɜ:/  | /ʒ/                 | /v/, /ə/, /g/, /f/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /ŋ/  | 35, 29%   |
| Respondent 10              | /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ɜ:/  | /f/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /j/  | /I/, /e/, /v/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ə/, /g/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ŋ/                          | 52, 94%   |

Based on the table above, it could be said that Kaurnese students have more pronunciation interferences than Rejangnese students. Respondent 1 gets the highest pronunciation interference which is 67,64%, with sound addition in nine sounds, sound omission in five sounds, and sound replacement in 19 sounds. Then, respondent 2 gets pronunciation interferences with a total number of 55,88%, with sound addition in seven sounds, sound omission in two sounds, and sound replacement in 13 sounds. Next, respondent 3 gets 50% of pronunciation interferences, with sound addition in seven sounds, sound replacement in 11 sounds, and no sound omitted. After that, respondent 4 gets pronunciation interferences with a total number of 55,88%, with sound addition in five sounds, sound omission in one sound, and sound replacement in 15 sounds. Lastly, respondent 5 gets the second highest pronunciation interference which is 64,70%, with sound addition in ten sounds, sound omission in three sounds, and sound replacement in 12 sounds. Furthermore in Rejangnese

students, respondent 6 gets pronunciation interferences with a total number of 35,29%, with sound addition in four sounds, sound omission only in one sound, and sound replacement in seven sounds. Then, respondent 7 gets 41,17% of pronunciation interferences, with sound addition in six sounds, sound omission in two sounds, and sound replacement in seven sounds. Next, respondent 8 gets pronunciation interferences with a total number of 50%, with sound addition in five sounds, sound omission in two sounds, and sound replacement in ten sounds. After that, respondent 9 gets 35,29% of pronunciation interferences, with sound addition in four sounds, sound only in one sound, and sound replacement in eight sounds. Lastly, respondent 10 gets the highest pronunciation interferences among Rejangnese students with a total number of 52,94%, with sound addition in four sounds, sound omission in four sounds, and sound replacement in 14 sounds.

Dealing with vowel sounds, it has been found that there were 12 English vowels pronounced incorrectly by Kaurnese students. They were /i:/, /I/, /e/, /æ/, /ɑ:/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ʌ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/. The interference of those sounds that occurred in students' pronunciation were the sound addition of /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, the sound omission of /ɜ:/, and the sound replacement of /i:/, /I/, /e/, /æ/, /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /ɒ/, /ɜ:/. On the other hand, there were nine English vowels pronounced incorrectly by Rejangnese students. They were /I/, /e/, /ɑ:/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, and /ə/. The interference of those sounds that occurred in students' pronunciation were the sound addition of /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, and the sound replacement of /I/, /e/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /ə/, /ɒ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/. This phenomenon occurs because of the language feature differences between English and students' native languages (Kaurnese & Rejangnese). It is in line with Avery and Ehrlich (2002) states that the factors that affect pronunciation are the difference in features between the target language and first language. For example, in sound addition, students pronounced the word 'board' /bɔ:d/ as /bɔ:rd/. They added phoneme /r/ to phoneme /ɔ:/. Then, in sound omission, they omitted phoneme /ɜ:/ in the word 'burn' /bɜ:n/ as /brɒn/. In other words, sound addition and sound omission occurred because they do not completely understand the inconsistencies in producing English sounds, while their native language is always consistent. After that, in sound replacement, students replaced phoneme /æ/ into /e/ in the word 'Beg' /bæg/ as /beg/. This occurred because the phoneme /æ/ does not exist in the students' native language, thus they substituted it with the nearest sound that exists in their native language which is the phoneme /e/.

Furthermore, dealing with consonant sounds, it has been found that there were 18 English consonants pronounced incorrectly by Kaurnese students. They were /p/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /ʃ/, /z/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/, /ŋ/, /l/, /r/, /n/, /j/. The interference of those sounds that occurred in students' pronunciation were the sound addition of /t/, /d/, /k/, /h/, /g/, /ʃ/, /r/, /ŋ/, /p/, /z/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, the sound omission of /z/, /θ/, /n/, /j/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /h/, and the sound replacement of /p/, /g/, /f/, /z/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/, /l/, /ʃ/, /d/. On the other hand, there were 13 English consonants pronounced incorrectly by Rejangnese students. They were /g/, /f/, /ʃ/, /z/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/, /ŋ/, /r/, /n/, /j/. The interference of those sounds that occurred in students' pronunciation were the sound addition of /r/, the sound omission of /z/, /θ/, /n/, /j/, /dʒ/, /f/, and the sound replacement of /g/, /f/, /z/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /h/, /ʃ/, /ŋ/. The interferences above occur because of the differences of sound system between English and students' native languages. It is inline with Zhang (2009) states that the factors affect pronunciation are the difference of systems between first language and second language. For example, in sound addition, students pronounced the word 'wrong' /rɒŋ/ as /wrɒŋ/, they added phoneme /w/ to phoneme /r/. Next, in sound omission, they omitted phoneme /j/ in the word 'europe' /jʊərəp/ as /e'urɒp/. Thus, sound addition and sound omission occurred because of the transfer from the first language to the second language. The way of students' native language sound produced was brought by the students in pronouncing English sounds. After that, in sound replacement, students replaced phoneme /ð/ into /t/ in the word 'breathe' /bri:ð/ as /bri:t/. This occurred because the phoneme /ð/ does not exist in the students' native language, hence they substituted it with the nearest sound that exists in their native language which is the phoneme /t/.

### Factors Affecting Pronunciation Interference of Kaurnese & Rejangnese Students

The researcher found that three main factors influence the students when they pronounced English words. First, native language interferes with students' pronunciation because their speech organs have become accustomed to producing native language sounds. This is evidenced by the answers of all students who indicated that they had used the native language since childhood and used the language in daily conversation. Second, age influences students' pronunciation since they rarely use the second language, especially in pronunciation because they have never practiced it. It is in line with a critical period hypothesis that states the younger one learns a second language the better (Siegler, 2006). Based on findings, students who began learning English in middle school had a higher frequency of pronunciation interferences than students who started learning English in elementary school. Then, the findings also showed that motivation is not a factor that influences students' pronunciation. This is evidenced by the answers of all students who indicated that

they are highly motivated in learning English because they consider learning English important. Furthermore, the difference in language features between English and students' native languages affects students' pronunciation because students have difficulty pronouncing English words properly. The findings of the study indicated that some English sounds are not present in the students' native languages, and some English sounds have the same phonetic symbol as the native language sounds but the way of pronunciation is different. As a result, students' native language interfered with English pronunciation.

## Conclusions

To summarise, students' native languages interfered with pronunciation since all Kaurnese and Rejangnese students had interference in pronouncing English sounds. It was found that Kaurnese students had interference in pronouncing 30 sounds, while Rejangnese students had interference in pronouncing 22 sounds. Then, Kaurnese students had the highest frequency of pronunciation interference at 67,64% while Rejangnese students had the lowest frequency of pronunciation interference at 35,29%. Thus, the Kaurnese language is more interference with English pronunciation than the Rejangnese language. Furthermore, this study revealed that three main factors influence the students' pronunciation, they are native, language, age, and the difference in language features between English and students' native language. In addition, students are suggested to learn more, practice more, and pay attention more to pronunciation correctly to avoid native language interference. Another recommendation for English lecturers is to give corrections and give further explanations for students' errors during the learning process especially when they make errors to avoid some interferences from their native language. Then, lecturers can use the results of this research to obtain information regarding the issues faced by students thus they can give appropriate solutions to solve the issues. The third suggestion for further research, such as finding aspects that affect native language interference in English pronunciation, and strategy or technique to teach English pronunciation to English students to solve the students' problems.

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