Local Language Interference on English Segmental and Suprasegmental Sounds of Rural Students at South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims at finding errors made by the students because of local language interference. In this case of Buginese interference to English pronunciation. This study employed qualitative method with a case study. There were seven students involved as participant. They were chosen purposively with some criteria. Research instrument used in collecting data was test. The test form was reading test, where the students read the word and sentences. Data transcription was analyzed in three steps, namely data reduction, data display, data classification, data interpretation, and verification and drawing conclusions. The result indicates the errors produced by the students are categorized in segmental and suprasegmental sounds. In terms of segmental aspects, the most common error is the substitution of sounds /θ/ is replaced with /t/ same thing can be seen in the sound /ð/, which is pronounced as /d/, students also tend to replace the sound /v/ with /f/, sound /tʃ/ with /k/ or /kh/. These errors mean the interference of the local language influence students' English pronunciation. They tend to adapt English sounds to sounds that are more familiar in the Bugis language. Therefore, students must practice their speech organs in order to produce right English sounds.

Keywords: Interference,   Local   Language, Segmental,   Suprasegmental, Pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

Mastering English means mastering all the elements inside. English learners need to speak as well as native speaker. One of the linguistics parts that should be produced accurately by students is English sounds. The sounds are categorized into segmental sounds and suprasegmental sounds. These sounds deal with pronunciation practice and speaking skill. Producing sounds in word or sentence correctly show the speaker skill to communicate to others. The influence of segmental and suprasegmental characteristics on comprehensibility or the efficacy of instructing these characteristics to enhance comprehensibility(Wang, 2022).

Concerning to urgency of using segmental and suprasegmental sound, the rural students from SMPN Kahu are really difficult to use English both in speaking and in other skills. They are hard to pronounce and stress the word correctly. The students performed poorly on the oral test, particularly regarding intonation and pronunciation (Fontiveros-Malana, 2018).After observing them in the class, many of them like to speak by their local language, that is Buginese. Some of them cannot speak Indonesian too, because their parents and family always talk to the child in Buginese. In school break, they prefer to speak Buginese to their friends than Bahasa Indonesia. Students' local language is very thick around school and home.

The situation above becomes the main reason of language interference occurred in English language learning. It is in line with Siregar, (2021). Employing two languages concurrently can lead to language distortion, which is referred to as language interference. According to Gashimov. (2023), language transfer (which is also referred to as L1 interference, linguistic interference, and cross-linguistic influence) is usually talked about regarding the learning and teaching of English. However, it can happen in any scenario where a person lacks a native-level proficiency in a language, such as when translating into a second language. Iinterference occurs when the learner organizes data from the second language based on their prior experience with their native language(Zhang and Zhang, 2019). Rizqiyah and Firmonasari. (2024) explain that The elements that led to interference due to the addition of particles were internal factors, including bilingualism, insufficient command of English grammar and vocabulary, and succumbing to habits from the mother tongue.

Dealing with the fact and previous related study, the research gap of this current study is interference of Buginese on students' English ability. Therefore, this study aims at finding errors made by the students because of local language interference. In this case of Buginese interference to English pronunciation. The dominant errors are classified into segmental and suprasegmental sounds. This study gives theoretical and practical implication to English phonology and

speaking skill. Theoretically, the result could enrich concept of first language interference to foreign language or second language acquisition. (Derakhshan and Karimi.(2015) trust that the first language affects the process of acquiring the second language. Practically, the errors found could be practiced by the students to produce the correct one. The implication of this study can enrich the concept of phonetics and phonology in English and Indonesian. The teacher will be creative and innovative to explore interactive teaching activity in ELT class.

METHOD
The Study Design
This study employed qualitative method with a case study. This design aimed at describing, summarizing, and interpreting phenomena in dept. The case was students' difficulties in pronouncing English word. To pronounce correctly, the students should master the segmental and suprasegmental sounds. This research design analyzes error based on sound's category deeply.

The Subject of the Research
The subjects of this study were rural students in SMP Kahu, Bone regency. There were seven students involved as participant. They were chosen purposively with some criteria. They speak Buginese fluently and active in English course. These students were considered producing many errors in mention English words while reading the segmental dan suprasegmental sounds.

Data Collection Technique
Research instrument used in collecting data was test. The test form was reading test, where the students read the word and sentences. There were 15 words, which consisted of vowel, consonants, and diphthong sounds for segmental sounds. There were 10 words and 5 sentences for suprasegmental sounds. In this part, it focused on stressing and intonation. The test was conducting by calling the students one by one come forward to teacher's desk, then they were given test to be read loudly. During the test, students' answer was kept in recording. It aimed to save all the data accurately. After finishing the test, data recording was transcribed and analyzed based on the research objectives.

Data Analysis Technique
Data transcription was analyzed in three steps, namely data reduction, data display, data classification, data interpretation, and verification and drawing conclusions. During the reduction stage, the researcher filtered data pertinent to the study's focus: the impact of Bugis language on students' English pronunciation, particularly regarding the mispronunciation of specific sounds. Direct quotes from students that pertained to the study's focus, including instances of pronunciation errors influenced by the Bugis language phonology system, were compiled by the researcher. The presented data is subsequently categorized according to the types of pronunciation errors. The goal of this process is to divide the data into

various categories, including vowel errors, consonant errors, and word stress errors. At this point, the researchers analyzed the data according to how the errors were classified and contextualized. The interpretation's results are intended to assess how much the Bugis language influences students' pronunciation. The last step involves formulating conclusions from the analyzed data. The conclusion responds to the stated problem, specifically regarding the impact of the Bugis language on English pronunciation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing various pronunciation errors made by students, this study found that there were several errors that appeared more frequently than others. These errors are referred to as dominant errors, both in segmental and suprasegmental aspects. Details of these dominant errors can be seen in the following table

Error in segmental and suprasegmental

Table 1: List of English Pronunciation Error

No	Segmental	Suprasegmental
1	/θ/ → /t/ (think → tin)	Wrong stress: *record* (noun → re'CORD)
2	/ð/ → /d/ (that → dat)	Wrong stress: *relax* (RElax)
3	/v/ → /f/ (van → fan)	Wrong stress: *happy* (hapPY)
4	/z/ → /s/ (zoo → suu/zo)	Flat intonation (record, relax, present)
5	/tʃ/ → /k/ (chair → khair/kair)	Unnatural rhythm (monotone/too fast reading)
6	/æ/ → /e/ (cat → ket)	
7	/ʌ/ → /a/ (cup → kap)	

From table 1, it can be seen that students still make various mistakes in English pronunciation, both segmental and suprasegmental aspects. In terms of segmental aspects, the most common error is the substitution of sounds that do not exist in the Bugis phonological system. For example, the sound /θ/ is replaced with /t/ in the word think, so that it is read as tin. This error occurs in almost all students because the sound /θ/ is not recognized in the Bugis language. The same thing can be seen in the sound /ð/, which is pronounced as /d/, such as in the word that, which is pronounced dat. In addition, students also tend to replace the sound /v/ with /f/, such as in the word "van" → "fan," and the sound /tʃ/ with /k/ or /kh/ in the word 'chair' → "kair/khair." Errors in vowels are also apparent, for example, /æ/ is pronounced /e/ in the word cat → ket, and /ʌ/ is pronounced /a/

in the word cup → kap. These errors indicate the influence of the mother tongue, as students tend to adapt English sounds to sounds that are more familiar in the Bugis language.

Table 2 Dominant Error

No	Segmental	Suprasegmental
1	/θ/ → /t/ (think → tin)	Wrong stress: *record* (noun → re'CORD)
2	/ð/ → /d/ (that → dat)	Wrong stress: *relax* (RElax)
3	/v/ → /f/ (van → fan)	Wrong stress: *happy* (hapPY)
4		Flat intonation (record, relax, present)

Based on table 2, it can be seen that students still make various mistakes in English pronunciation, both in terms of segmental and suprasegmental aspects. In terms of segmental aspects, the most common mistake is the change in consonant sounds that do not exist in the Bugis language. For example, the sound /θ/ in the word think is pronounced as /t/, resulting in the word sounding like tin. The same occurs with the sound /ð/ in the word that, which is pronounced as dat. These errors occur because both of these interdental sounds are not recognized in the Bugis phonological system, so students replace them with sounds that are easier and closer to their native language. In addition, some students also change the sound /v/ to /f/ in the word van so that it sounds fan. In the affricate sound /t$_2$/, students tend to pronounce it as /k/ or /kh/, for example in the word chair pronounced kair or khair. Errors are also seen in vowels, for example, /æ/ is pronounced as /e/ in the word cat which turns into ket, and the sound /ʌ/ is pronounced as /a/ in the Word cup so that it sounds like a hood. This result is similar to Strik et.al., (2009) reveal that the students found it difficult to pronounce /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/. The elements that influence the students' pronunciation are, therefore, interference, phonological system, and motivation. The same case in Rafael. (2019) concluded that the primary reason is the interference from the subjects' native language. Another reason for mistakes in English pronunciation is an intra-language error. The third reason was a developmental error. The subjects' knowledge of English is the cause of the developmental errors.

Meanwhile, in the suprasegmental aspect, errors were found related to the placement of word stress and intonation. Some students put stress on the wrong syllable, such as the word record in the form of a noun that is supposed to be stressed on the first syllable, but is read re'cord. The same thing happens with the word relax, which is pronounced RElax, as well as the word happy, which is pressed on the second syllable so that it sounds hapPY. In terms of intonation,

students tend to read with flat intonation, for example in the words record and relax. In addition, there are also errors in the rhythm aspect, where students read at a tempo that is too fast or monotonous so that the stress pattern of English does not sound clear. Error in pronunciation is occurred because of many factors. In EFL class, especially from rural school, the failure of mispronunciation because of interreference by students' mother tongue. As (Lindemann.2016) Language can vary at its most fundamental level based on social factors pertinent to individuals, including their social class and geographical background, as well as factors tied to the social context of language use, such as the degree of formality or the intention to adjust to one's conversation partner. Pratiwi and Indrayani. (2021) expressed that language learners, particularly those learning English as a foreign language, often make pronunciation errors due to the lack of English usage in their everyday lives. Pronunciation is not only happened in South- Sulawesi of Indonesia, but also in Japan, so Tsubota, et. al. (2004) established a system for learning English pronunciation that evaluates how understandable the speech of Japanese learners is and ranks their mistakes in terms of how they affect native speakers' understanding.

Overall, the results of the analysis in this table show that students ' segmental errors mostly occur due to the influence of the Bugis language that does not have certain sounds in English. While on the suprasegmental aspect, students still have difficulty in placing word stress correctly and tend to use flat intonation. It is proved that mother tongue interference has a strong enough influence on students ' English pronunciation. The novelty of this study is phonetics and phonology of local language should be elaborated in teaching English sounds.

According to Shak, et.al., (2016) state having poor pronunciation makes someone cannot express themselves well to communicate. Additionally, Noviyenty and Putri, (2021) emphasized that Students' ability to speak English can be influenced by their mother tongue, particularly when it comes to the intrinsic pronunciation of words. In short, student need practice and production activity (Mariani, 2021). The practical implication of this study is expected to be useful in teaching English that students must be practiced several times to produce English sounds correctly. The practices can be done by integrating technology communication. This study only focuses on sounds, it should also explore best practices to teach pronunciation in ELF class. Dennis, N. K. (2024) recommends to us AI-Power Speech Recognition technology to improve pronunciation. Similar to Pham, V. T. T., & Pham, A. T. (2025), speak with ELSA application could minimize students' mispronunciation. This study is in line with Ihsani, et. al. that students should drill and repeat the English word to improve their English skill.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the aim of the study, students who are from rural area with thick local language have pronunciation problems in producing segmental and suprasegmental sounds. In terms of segmental sounds, students are hard to produce /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /z/, /tʃ/, /æ/, /ʌ/. In terms of suprasegmental sounds, the students produce wrong stress such as record (noun → re'CORD, *relax* (RElax), *happy* (happy Flat intonation (record, relax, present), and unnatural rhythm (monotone/too fast reading). Mispronouncing of those words is because of the local language interreference, in this case Buginese. Besides, less pronunciation practice and unrecognized English sounds affect students' ability to mention words correctly. Rural students, actually, have potential to speal fluently and accurately with right pronunciation as long as they are leaded to practice many times with different instructional activity.

Recommendation

Dealing with the result of the study, it is recommended to English teachers to explore teaching media, such as application that could engage students' activity in pronunciation. Moreover, it is recommended to find out interactive activity or technique to guide the students' pronunciation practices. For the further researcher, it better to continue this study in terms of implementing innovative teaching method to classroom, in order to active students' speech articulators. Doing repetition for several times could help the students minimize pronunciation errors in English language learning, especially in rural context. Therefore, it is expected this study can be used as reference in doing for the next study.

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