



Local Language Barriers in Pronouncing English Words: A Case Study Among Mandailingnese Students

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the challenges faced by Mandailingnese students in pronouncing English words. The interference of the Mandailing language in English poses several difficulties for these students. Therefore, this study aims to identify the specific problems encountered by Mandailing students. Conducted at STAIN Mandailing Natal in the Family Law Study Program, this research adopts a qualitative research design with a case study approach. The instruments utilized include an oral test involving the reading of three different texts, supported by audio recordings, and interviews to explore students' pronunciation challenges in English. The researchers identified various issues affecting Mandailing students' pronunciation, including linguistic interference from the Mandailing language, misconceptions, lack of motivation to study, environmental factors, ineffective study habits, limited access to modern technology, economic constraints, and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of English language proficiency. From these findings, it can be inferred that Mandailing students encounter numerous hurdles in pronouncing English words, leading to decreased confidence and interest in the language. Therefore, educators and institutions are urged to address these challenges to support Mandailing students effectively.

Keywords: Language Barrier, Mother Tongue, EFL Students, Pronunciation.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is extremely important in everyday life since it allows us to communicate with others. Language skills are the foundation for everyone's ability to express themselves, beginning with their feelings, desires, opinions, and requirements as individuals. Knowing various languages enhances communication skills. English must be taught to students because it has become an international language. Learning English is much more difficult than learning Indonesian, apart from comprehending the meaning of the language, students must be able to write and speak the words in English using the correct pronunciation.

Pronunciation proficiency in English is a vital skill for non-native speakers, yet it often poses significant challenges, particularly among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The mother tongue users will encounter some common difficulties when pronouncing the English's words. Brown (2007) stated that factors that cause the difficulties are phonological differences between their native language (L1) and their second language/foreign language (L2). In the case of Mandailingnese students, the interference of their native language or mother tongue, presents obstacles in accurately pronouncing English words. This interference stems from differences in phonological systems, resulting in various pronunciation difficulties (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Moreover, misconceptions and lack of motivation to study English can exacerbate these challenges (Dornyei, 2001).

Previous research has highlighted the multifaceted nature of pronunciation difficulties encountered by ESL learners. Linguistic interference from the native language has been identified as a prominent factor affecting pronunciation accuracy (Cook, 2003). Additionally, environmental factors such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom and ineffective study habits contribute to students' struggles with pronunciation.

Understanding the specific pronunciation challenges faced by Mandailingnese students is essential for developing targeted interventions to support their language learning journey. By examining the linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors influencing pronunciation acquisition, educators and institutions can devise effective strategies to enhance English language proficiency among Mandailingnese students.

Mandailing, one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia, has a unique language and culture. Mandailing dialect reflects the sounds in foreign languages such as English. Once, Mandailingnese pronounced bird as /birt/. They had difficulty in pronouncing some sounds in terms of English vowel sounds. It is highlighted that Mandailingnese experience mispronunciation of English vowel sounds.

All native speakers whose English is not their mother tongue will bring their mother tongue like accent to the English pronunciation. Due to the different phonological system between Mandailing language and English, such a problem arises. It is observed that mother tongue like accents interfere with English pronunciation. It is difficult for Mandailingnese whose English is their foreign language to speak with native like pronunciation. Mandailingnese bring their different accent freely from their native like accent in pronouncing English, then their pronunciation with their mother tongue affects the English words.

Given the linguistic diversity among students, particularly those from Mandailingnese backgrounds, the pronunciation of English words presents formidable challenges. The primary issue lies in identifying the specific hurdles encountered by Mandailing students when attempting to articulate English phonemes accurately. This encompasses not only linguistic interference from their native Mandailing language but also broader challenges in English language learning, such as misconceptions, motivational factors, and environmental influences. Moreover, understanding the broader context of language learning obstacles faced by Mandailing students is imperative for devising effective pedagogical strategies to address these challenges comprehensively. Therefore, this study seeks to elucidate the multifaceted problems encountered by Mandailing students in pronouncing English words.

and to explore the broader challenges they face in learning English, contributing to the enhancement of language education practices tailored to their needs.

Purpose of the Study

Building upon the identified linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors influencing pronunciation acquisition among Mandailing students, the purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, it aims to systematically investigate the specific problems encountered by Mandailing students in pronouncing English words. By delving into the nuances of linguistic interference, misconceptions, motivational factors, and environmental influences, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges hindering accurate pronunciation. Secondly, the study endeavors to shed light on the broader challenges faced by Mandailing students in learning English, thereby contributing to the development of targeted interventions and pedagogical approaches tailored to their linguistic needs and learning contexts. Through these endeavors, the study ultimately aspires to enhance language education practices and support mechanisms to facilitate more effective English language learning among Mandailing students.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant implications for both theoretical understanding and practical applications in language education. By elucidating the specific challenges faced by Mandailing students in pronouncing English words and exploring broader issues in English language learning, the findings of this study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge on second language acquisition. Furthermore, the insights gained from this research can inform the development of targeted interventions and instructional strategies to enhance pronunciation proficiency and overall language learning outcomes among Mandailing students and potentially other ESL learners facing similar challenges.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses specifically on Mandailing students enrolled in the Islamic Family Law Study Program at STAIN Mandailing Natal. By concentrating on this particular student demographic within a specific academic program, the study aims to provide a detailed examination of pronunciation difficulties and broader challenges in English language learning within a defined context. The research scope encompasses various factors influencing pronunciation acquisition, including linguistic interference, misconceptions, motivational factors, and environmental influences. Additionally, the study incorporates qualitative research methods, including oral tests and interviews, to explore these factors comprehensively.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that warrant acknowledgment. Firstly, the findings may not be generalizable beyond the specific context of Mandailing students enrolled in the Islamic Family Law Study Program at STAIN

Mandailing Natal. Additionally, the study's reliance on qualitative research methods may limit the breadth and depth of the findings compared to quantitative approaches. Furthermore, factors such as participant bias, researcher subjectivity, and logistical constraints may influence the interpretation and generalizability of the results. Finally, the study's scope is delimited to pronunciation challenges and broader issues in English language learning, excluding other aspects of language acquisition and proficiency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation Challenges Among ESL Learners

Pronunciation proficiency is a critical aspect of second language acquisition, particularly for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Pronunciation challenges among ESL learners are multifaceted and can be influenced by various factors, including linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors. Research in this area has highlighted several key challenges faced by ESL learners in achieving accurate pronunciation.

- *Phonological Differences:* One of the most significant obstacles is the variation in phonological systems between the learners' native language and English. These discrepancies can make it difficult to accurately produce English phonemes, leading to pronunciation problems (Flege, 1995).
- *Linguistic interference:* Linguistics Interference reflects the social context of bilingualism. Interference is one of the current concerns in foreign language instruction. It is characterised as the transfer of traits from one language to another on multiple levels, including phonological, grammatical, lexical, and orthographic. The term phonological refers to foreign accents such as stress, rhythm, intonation, and speech sounds of the original language that influence the second language (Levoka, 2010).
- *Segmental and Suprasegmental:* ESL students may struggle with both segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental elements (intonation, stress, and rhythm). While segmental features can make it difficult to recognise and produce distinct English sounds, suprasegmental qualities are important for transmitting meaning and can alter speech comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 2015).
- *Perception and Production:* ESL learners may have difficulty not only producing appropriate pronunciation but also recognising and distinguishing between English sounds. This disparity between perception and production skills may impair their ability to effectively self-correct pronunciation problems (Best & Tyler, 2007).
- *Individual Differences:* Pronunciation competency varies among ESL learners due to variances in age, ability, motivation, and language learning methodologies (Derwing & Rossiter, 2003). Individual differences can influence the amount to which learners face pronunciation challenges and their capacity to overcome them.

Overall, understanding the diverse pronunciation challenges faced by ESL learners is essential for designing effective instructional approaches and interventions to support their

language learning journey. By addressing these challenges systematically, educators can enhance the pronunciation proficiency and overall communication skills of ESL learners.

Language Interference

Language interference, also known as cross-linguistic effect, arises when the linguistic characteristics of one language influence the production or comprehension of another. This phenomenon has been thoroughly researched in the context of second language acquisition, offering light on how learners' native language influences their competency in the target language.

- *Phonological Interference*: Numerous studies have investigated phonological interference, focusing on how the phonetic and phonological features of the native language affect the pronunciation of second language learners. For example, research has shown that speakers of languages with different phoneme inventories may have difficulty producing or perceiving certain sounds in the target language. Phonological interference may be mostly caused by borrowing systems from another language. It is also called the interference of sounds if a speaker reproduces sounds of one language and makes mistakes by adapting it with another language. Phonological interference mostly happens when the learners tend to substitute the particular target language sound with mother tongue phonemes when uttering one letter. It is because there are certain sounds of the target language which do not exist in the mother tongue. Besides, the second language learners identify that target language as being the same as the mother tongue sounds which are actually different (Mahmud, 2017).
- *Orthographic interference* : Orthographic Interference is the influence of the native language's writing system on second-language reading and spelling. Studies have shown that learners frequently transfer spelling patterns and letter-sound correspondences from their native language to the target language, resulting in reading and writing errors (Koda, 2005).
- *Syntactic and Morphological Interference*: This occurs when students transfer sentence structures and word creation processes from their native language to the target language. According to research, learners can write sentences that follow their home language's syntactic patterns, resulting in ungrammatical or difficult formulations in the target language (Odlin, 1989).
- *Lexical interference*: Lexical interference refers to the influence of the native language's lexicon on the acquisition and usage of second language terminology. According to research, learners may rely on translation counterparts or false cognates from their original language while seeking to express themselves in the target language, resulting in errors in meaning and usage (Ringbom, 2007).
- *Pragmatic interference* : Pragmatic interference is the influence of cultural norms and communicative tactics from one's native language on second-language conversation. According to research, learners may use native language politeness practices, speech actions, and conversational customs incorrectly in the target language, resulting in misunderstandings and communication breakdowns (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Factors Affecting Pronunciation Acquisition

A broad variety of factors influence second-language pronunciation acquisition, including individual learner traits, linguistic elements, and instructional circumstances. Understanding these characteristics is critical for creating successful treatments and aiding learners' development of accurate and understandable speech abilities.

- *Age at Acquisition:* According to research, the age at which learners are first exposed to the target language has a major impact on their pronunciation learning. Individuals who start learning a second language earlier in life typically have greater levels of pronunciation proficiency than late starters (Birdsong, 1992). This crucial period concept holds that there is an optimal window of opportunity for developing native-like pronunciation, which gradually fades with age.
- *Language Aptitude:* Individual differences in linguistic aptitude, such as phonetic coding ability and auditory discrimination skills, have a substantial impact on pronunciation acquisition. Learners with high language aptitude are more sensitive to the phonetic aspects of the target language and can imitate native-like pronunciation (Skehan, 1989).
- *Language Input and Exposure:* Learners' pronunciation development is influenced by the quantity and quality of language input as well as exposure to the target language. Learners who have enough opportunities for authentic communication and engagement with proficient speakers of the target language are more likely to learn correct pronunciation (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Furthermore, exposure to comprehensible input, where the language input is slightly beyond the learners' current competence level, aids pronunciation acquisition by giving models of imitation and reinforcement.
- *Instructional Strategies:* The effectiveness of instructional techniques and methodologies used in language teaching can have a major impact on pronunciation acquisition. Explicit instruction concentrating on phonetic features, systematic pronunciation practice, and corrective feedback from instructors have been demonstrated to improve students' pronunciation skills (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Furthermore, technology-enhanced learning aids, such as pronunciation software and interactive multimedia resources, provide more possibilities for students to practice and receive feedback on their pronunciation.
- *Learner Motivation and Attitudes:* Motivation and attitudes towards pronunciation learning are critical components of pronunciation acquisition. Learners who are intrinsically driven, have a good attitude towards pronunciation acquisition, and see pronunciation mastery as necessary for communication are more likely to devote time and effort to developing their pronunciation skills (Dorynei, 2001). Salem (2007) also said that some psychological issues that prevent students from practicing speaking English include fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation.

Pronunciation acquisition is a complex process influenced by a combination of individual, linguistic, and contextual factors. By addressing these factors systematically through targeted instruction and providing learners with ample opportunities for practice and feedback, educators can facilitate the development of accurate and intelligible pronunciation skills among second language learners.

English Language Teaching Methods in Multilingual Contexts

In multilingual settings, where students come from a variety of linguistic origins, English language teaching approaches must be tailored to meet the unique needs and skills of students. Several ways and tactics have been created to effectively teach English to multilingual learners while taking into account linguistic variety, cultural variations, and individual learner characteristics.

- *Communicative language teaching* : Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes the value of meaningful communication and involvement in language learning. CLT encourages learners to use English as a tool for real-world communication in multilingual settings, regardless of their linguistic background. Pair work, group conversations, and role-playing activities allow students to practice English in real-world settings while also improving their speaking and listening skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
- *Content-Based Instruction (CBI)*: Content Based Instruction combines language learning with subject matter content, enabling students to acquire English while studying academic or vocational subjects. In bilingual classrooms, CBI allows students to study English while still learning about other topics. Students improve their language skills in a contextually rich environment by exploring meaningful information in English (Snow & Brinton, 1997).
- *Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)* emphasizes task completion as the primary method of language learning. In multilingual settings, TBLT engages students in meaningful, real-world projects that necessitate the use of English for communication and problem solving. Tasks are intended to be meaningful and relevant to students' interests and experiences, allowing them to use English language skills in real-world situations (Ellis, 2003).
- *Language-Sensitive Pedagogy*: This approach recognises and addresses the linguistic variety of pupils in multilingual classrooms. This approach emphasizes the value of including students' original languages and cultural backgrounds in English language instruction. Teachers can employ code-switching, translation, and contrastive analysis to help students learn and comprehend (Cummins, 2000).
- *Technology-Enhanced Learning*: Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software, web resources, and multimedia materials are all important resources for English language education in multilingual settings. These tools offer students interactive and engaging opportunities to practice English language skills, receive feedback, and access authentic language input (Chapelle, 2001).

English language teaching approaches in multilingual settings must be adaptable, dynamic, and attentive to the different requirements and backgrounds of students. Using communicative, content-based, task-based, language-sensitive, and technology-enhanced approaches, educators can create inclusive and effective learning environments that promote English language proficiency and cross-cultural understanding among students from various linguistic backgrounds.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Qualitative Case Study Approach

This research used a qualitative case study technique to delve deeper into the specific issues that Mandailing students have when pronouncing English words within the framework of their academic programme at STAIN Mandailing Natal. This method provides for a thorough examination of the phenomena under inquiry, including the complexities and nuances of pronunciation difficulties as well as larger concerns in English language learning encountered by participants.

The qualitative case study approach is ideal for capturing the intricacies of language learning experiences while also giving rich, contextualized insights into the research issue (Merriam, 2009). The case study design, which focuses on a specific group of Mandailing students within a specific academic programme, allows for an in-depth examination of the unique elements influencing pronunciation acquisition and language learning in this setting.

Participant

Participants in the study will be chosen specifically from the Islamic Family Law Study Programme at STAIN Mandailing Natal, providing participation from a variety of linguistic backgrounds and English skill levels. Purposive sampling enables for the identification of individuals with relevant experiences and insights into the research issue (Patton 2002).

Data Collection Techniques

The study will use a variety of data gathering strategies to generate rich and diverse information on pronunciation obstacles and broader issues in English language learning among Mandailing students. These procedures include oral exams in which individuals are asked to read aloud and pronounce English texts, using audio recordings to capture pronunciation accuracy and fluency. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews will be done to investigate participants' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes about English language learning and pronunciation issues.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis approaches, such as thematic analysis, will be used to discover patterns, topics, and categories in the data. Transcripts from oral examinations and interviews will be rigorously analyzed to get significant insights into the specific issues Mandailing students face while pronouncing English words, as well as the larger elements influencing their language learning experiences.

Using a qualitative case study approach, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of pronunciation challenges and broader issues in English language learning among Mandailing students, thereby contributing to the development of targeted interventions and pedagogical strategies to meet their language learning requirements.

Participants and Setting

Participants

The study will feature ten students enrolled in STAIN Mandailing Natal's Islamic Family Law programme. Purposive sampling will be used to ensure that participants come from varied linguistic backgrounds and have varying degrees of English ability within the academic setting of Islamic Family Law. The selection criteria will prioritize students who are actively involved in English language study and eager to contribute their experiences and thoughts on pronunciation issues. The study's inclusion of participants from this programme attempts to focus on a group with specialized language learning needs and experiences linked to legal terminology and English conversation.

Setting

STAIN Mandailing Natal will be the key setting for the research. STAIN Mandailing Natal, located in Panyabungan, Indonesia, provides an appropriate academic atmosphere for students enrolled in the Islamic Family Law programme to explore pronunciation issues and language learning experiences. The location provides access to classrooms, libraries, and other facilities needed for data collecting and processing. Furthermore, STAIN Mandailing Natal's emphasis on Islamic studies provides a unique setting for studying how English language acquisition combines with the specialized topic of Islamic Family Law.

The selection of participants from STAIN Mandailing Natal's Islamic Family Law programme is consistent with the research focus on exploring pronunciation issues and English language learning experiences in a specific academic setting. The participants' enrollment in a specialized programme provides for a more focused assessment into the linguistic demands and obstacles specific to their field of study. Furthermore, doing the study at STAIN Mandailing Natal gives participants a familiar and relevant location, allowing for greater engagement and collaboration in the research process. Overall, the participants and setting allow for a concentrated and contextually rich investigation of pronunciation issues and English language learning experiences among STAIN Mandailing Natal's Islamic Family Law programme students (Charmaz, 2006).

Data Collection Techniques

In this study, a variety of data collection procedures will be employed to gather complete and detailed information on pronunciation issues and English language learning experiences among Mandailing students enrolled in the Islamic Family Law curriculum at STAIN Mandailing Natal. These methodologies were chosen to capture a variety of aspects of the research question while also offering multiple sources of evidence for analysis.

Oral Tests

Participants will be required to take oral tests covering the reading of English literature. These texts will be carefully selected to represent a wide range of linguistic characteristics, including diverse phonemes, word stress patterns, and sentence structures. Participants will read the texts aloud while being recorded with audio devices. The oral exams will test participants' accuracy, fluency, and intonation in English.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with participants to explore their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes towards pronunciation challenges and English language learning. The interviews will provide opportunities for participants to share personal anecdotes, insights, and reflections on their language learning journey. Interview questions will be designed to elicit detailed responses and encourage participants to express their thoughts and feelings openly.

Observations

In order to strengthen the data acquired through speech examinations and interviews, observations of participants' language learning activities and interactions in the classroom will be made. These observations will provide important contextual information about the participants' language learning experiences, classroom dynamics, and teaching techniques. Observational notes will be taken to document relevant observations and behaviors seen during the research procedure.

Document Analysis

Relevant documents, such as course materials, syllabi, and language learning resources used in the Islamic Family Law programme, will be evaluated to gain a better understanding of curriculum content, instructional strategies, and language learning goals. Document analysis will provide participants with more context and background information regarding their language learning experiences and pronunciation issues.

Ethical considerations will be prioritized throughout the data collection process. All participants will give informed consent, and their confidentiality and privacy will be protected. Participants will be made aware of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Furthermore, steps will be taken to protect participants' identities and the confidentiality of their responses during data analysis and reporting.

This study will use oral tests, semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis to collect comprehensive and multifaceted data on pronunciation challenges and English language learning experiences among Mandailing students enrolled in the Islamic Family Law programme at STAIN Mandailing Natal. These data gathering approaches will allow for a thorough examination of the research question, as well as the development of targeted interventions and pedagogical strategies to help students with their language learning needs.

Data Analysis Procedures

In this study, a systematic and rigorous approach to data analysis will be employed to derive meaningful insights from the collected data on pronunciation challenges and English language learning experiences among Mandailing students in the Islamic Family Law program at STAIN Mandailing Natal. The data analysis procedures will involve several key steps, including data organization, coding, categorization, and interpretation.

Data Organization

The first stage in data analysis is to organize the acquired data so that it can be analyzed systematically. Audio recordings of spoken tests and interviews will be transcribed verbatim, while observational notes and document analysis findings will be collated for analysis. The data will be organized and stored securely to maintain confidentiality and accessibility during the analysis process.

Initial Coding

The data will then be subjected to initial coding, which involves identifying and labeling meaningful units of information with descriptive codes. This approach is systematically evaluating the data to uncover essential themes, patterns, and concepts pertinent to the study questions. Open coding approaches, such as line-by-line coding and inductive reasoning, will be utilized to produce initial codes depending on the data content.

Categorization and Theme Development

The coded data will then be categorized and organized into broader themes and categories based on their conceptual relevance and interconnectedness. Similar codes will be grouped together to form overarching themes that capture the central ideas and patterns emerging from the data. Through constant comparison and iterative analysis, the themes will be refined and developed to provide a coherent and comprehensive representation of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Interpretation and Integration

Once the themes have been identified and developed, the data will be interpreted to derive meaningful insights and conclusions. The interpretations will involve examining the relationships between themes, exploring variations within the data, and identifying underlying patterns and trends. Triangulation, the process of comparing and contrasting findings from multiple data sources, will be used to enhance the credibility and validity of the interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Member Checking and Validation

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, member checking will be conducted by presenting the preliminary findings to participants for their feedback and validation. Participants will be invited to review the interpretations and provide their perspectives on the accuracy and relevance of the findings. Their input will be incorporated

into the final analysis, enhancing the credibility and authenticity of the research findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Reporting and Presentation

Finally, the findings will be synthesized and presented in an understandable, coherent, and entertaining manner. The analysis process, including theme generation and interpretation, will be documented and presented in detail to ensure transparency and accountability. Visual aids, such as tables, charts, and diagrams, can be utilised to improve the presentation of the findings and help readers understand them more clearly.

This study uses these data analysis approaches to extract useful insights and conclusions from the collected data on pronunciation issues and English language learning experiences among Mandailing students. The systematic and rigorous analytical approach will assure the legitimacy, validity, and reliability of the study findings, thereby advancing knowledge in the field of language education and pedagogy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Following the data, the researcher discovered that linguistic hurdles in pronouncing English words faced by Mandailing pupils, which included some English phonemes, made it difficult for them to speak due to the interference of the Mandailing local language. The following areas pose challenges for students

Challenges in Pronouncing Consonant Sounds

Participants reported difficulty pronouncing some consonant sounds in English. For example, many people struggled to distinguish between voiced and voiceless consonants like /b/ and /p/, /d/ and /t/, and /g/ and /k/. Because of their comparable articulation, voiced consonants, which cause the vocal chords to vibrate, posed unique obstacles. Participants frequently mispronounced words with these consonant pairs, resulting in communication breakdowns and misunderstandings in spoken English.

Challenges in Pronouncing Vowel Sounds

Pronouncing English vowel sounds presented significant challenges for participants, particularly those that do not exist in the Mandailing language. For instance, the English vowels /æ/, /ε/, and /ɪ/ were frequently mispronounced or substituted with similar sounds from the participants' native language. Additionally, diphthongs, such as /eɪ/ and /aɪ/, were challenging to produce accurately, resulting in distorted pronunciation and reduced intelligibility in spoken English.

Lack of Confidence Due to Pronunciation Anxiety

Many individuals reported having pronunciation anxiety, which reduced their confidence and willingness to interact in English. The dread of making pronunciation mistakes or being criticized by classmates and teachers caused self-consciousness and

avoidance behaviors during English language activities. As a result, individuals were reluctant to participate in speaking tasks and preferred passive learning activities like listening or reading.

Environmental Factors

Environmental issues, such as societal views towards English and its perceived importance, have emerged as major impediments to pronunciation improvement. Despite the emphasis on English language learning in academic contexts, participants rated English ability as less important than other subjects or abilities. Cultural norms and societal expectations influenced this perception, with skill in Mandailing and Islamic studies taking precedence over English proficiency. As a result, participants lacked desire and incentives to dedicate time and effort to developing their speaking skills.

Linguistic Interference from Mandailing Language

In this study, linguistic interference from the Mandailing language was discovered to have a considerable impact on Mandailing pupils' pronunciation abilities when learning English. The analysis discovered several ways in which linguistic interference affects their pronunciation proficiency and accuracy in spoken English.

Phonological Interference

Mandailing students exhibited difficulties in accurately reproducing English phonemes that do not exist in their native language or differ phonetically. For example, the distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants in English, such as /b/ and /p/, or /d/ and /t/, posed challenges due to the absence of such distinctions in Mandailing phonology. Consequently, participants often mispronounced words containing these sounds, leading to reduced intelligibility in spoken English.

Phonotactic Interference

Differences in phonotactic patterns between Mandailing and English resulted in errors in word structure and syllable formation. Mandailing students applied the phonotactic rules of their native language to English, leading to syllable deletions, additions, or alterations. Consonant clusters common in English words may have been simplified or modified to align with Mandailing phonotactic patterns, affecting the pronunciation of multisyllabic words.

Intonation and Prosodic Interference

Mandailing students encountered challenges in replicating English intonation patterns and stress contours due to differences in prosodic features between the two languages. As a tonal language, Mandailing has distinctive pitch patterns that may influence the production of English intonation, particularly in declarative and interrogative sentences. The mismatch in intonation and rhythm between Mandailing and English speech contributed to perceived differences in speech melody and rhythm.

Lexical and Semantic Interference

Differences in vocabulary and semantics between Mandailing and English also influenced pronunciation. Mandailing students struggled with accurately translating and pronouncing English words with no direct equivalents in their native language. Semantic differences led to errors in word choice and usage, affecting the overall clarity and appropriateness of spoken English.

Factors Contributing to Pronunciation Difficulties

Several factors were identified as contributing to the pronunciation difficulties experienced by Mandailing students learning English. These factors encompass a range of linguistic, psychological, and environmental influences that intersect to shape students' pronunciation abilities and challenges.

a. Linguistic Interference from Mandailing Language

Linguistic interference from the Mandailing language emerged as a primary factor contributing to pronunciation difficulties. Differences in phonology, phonotactics, intonation, and vocabulary between Mandailing and English influenced the production of English sounds and speech patterns. Participants struggled to navigate these linguistic differences, resulting in mispronunciations, phonological errors, and syntactic inaccuracies in spoken English.

b. Pronunciation Anxiety and Lack of Confidence

Pronunciation anxiety and lack of confidence emerged as significant psychological barriers to pronunciation improvement. Many participants reported feeling self-conscious and apprehensive about making pronunciation errors in English, leading to avoidance behaviors and reluctance to engage in spoken language activities. Pronunciation anxiety undermined students' confidence and hindered their willingness to take risks and experiment with new pronunciation strategies.

c. Limited Exposure and Practice Opportunities

Limited exposure to authentic English input and opportunities for pronunciation practice were identified as environmental factors contributing to pronunciation difficulties. Participants reported a lack of access to English-speaking environments outside the classroom, restricting their exposure to natural speech patterns and models. Additionally, a dearth of structured pronunciation practice activities within the curriculum hindered students' ability to develop and refine their pronunciation skills.

d. Sociocultural Attitudes towards English

Sociocultural attitudes towards English and its perceived importance influenced students' motivation and investment in pronunciation learning. Despite the emphasis on English language proficiency in academic settings, English was often perceived as secondary to other subjects or skills deemed more culturally and socially relevant. Societal norms and expectations prioritizing proficiency in the Mandailing language and Islamic studies over

English proficiency contributed to students' ambivalence towards pronunciation improvement.

Impact on Students' Confidence and Interest in English

Pronunciation Anxiety and Self-consciousness

Pronunciation difficulties contributed to pronounced levels of anxiety and self-consciousness among students. Fear of making pronunciation errors in English led to heightened levels of apprehension and insecurity during language activities. Students expressed concerns about being judged by peers and instructors, leading to a reluctance to participate in spoken language tasks and a preference for passive learning activities.

Reduced Confidence in Speaking Skills

Pronunciation challenges eroded students' confidence in their speaking abilities, undermining their willingness to engage in oral communication in English. Many students reported feeling self-conscious and inhibited when speaking English, fearing negative evaluation and embarrassment. As a result, they tended to avoid speaking opportunities and withdrew from interactive language activities, further exacerbating their confidence issues.

Diminished Interest in English Learning

Pronunciation difficulties and associated confidence issues had a detrimental effect on students' overall interest and motivation in learning English. Students expressed frustration and disillusionment with their perceived lack of progress in pronunciation improvement, leading to decreased motivation and engagement in language learning activities. The perceived gap between their pronunciation abilities and desired proficiency levels further dampened their enthusiasm for English learning.

Negative Impact on Academic Performance

Pronunciation difficulties and the resulting lack of confidence and interest in English had adverse consequences for students' academic performance. Students struggled to effectively communicate and participate in English language activities, leading to diminished learning outcomes and achievement levels. Pronunciation-related anxieties and insecurities also affected students' performance in assessments and evaluations, impacting their overall academic success.

Discussion

The findings underscore the profound impact of linguistic interference from Mandailing on the pronunciation abilities of Mandailing students learning English. By understanding the specific ways in which interference manifests in phonology, phonotactics, prosody, and vocabulary, educators can develop targeted interventions to address these challenges.

The students' problems in pronouncing English words, which have been formulated above, are caused by the interference of the students' mother tongue, namely: Mandailing

language. In Mandailing phoneme (Aksara tulak-tulak), there are no phonemes such as vowels /ə/, and /ɜ:/; and consonants /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, /f/, /v/, and /z/. Since the research subjects are the students who are used to speak Mandailing language in their daily life, so it is obvious that they find it difficult to pronounce such phonemes by themselves

Strategies such as explicit instruction on English phonetics, practice activities focusing on problematic phonemes and word structures, and exposure to authentic English speech can help mitigate the effects of linguistic interference and support Mandailing students in achieving more accurate and comprehensible pronunciation in English.

The identified pronunciation challenges reflect the complex interplay of linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors influencing language learning among Mandailing students. Difficulties in articulating consonant and vowel sounds highlight the impact of linguistic interference from the native language and the need for targeted instruction and practice in phonetics and phonology. Pronunciation anxiety and perceived societal attitudes towards English underscore the importance of addressing learners' affective needs and fostering a supportive learning environment. By understanding and addressing these challenges, educators can develop tailored interventions and pedagogical strategies to support Mandailing students in overcoming pronunciation difficulties and enhancing their English language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

The study identified significant pronunciation challenges among Mandailing students learning English, largely stemming from linguistic differences between the two languages. These challenges, including phonological disparities and phonotactic variations, hindered students' ability to accurately reproduce English sounds and speech patterns. Moreover, pronunciation difficulties contributed to heightened levels of anxiety and self-consciousness among students, resulting in reduced confidence in speaking English and a reluctance to engage in oral communication activities. Consequently, these affective barriers negatively impacted students' overall interest and motivation in learning English, leading to decreased enthusiasm and engagement in language learning activities, and ultimately affecting their academic performance.

The findings of this study underscore the critical importance of addressing pronunciation difficulties among Mandailing students learning English. Pronunciation challenges, stemming from linguistic disparities between Mandailing and English, significantly impact students' confidence, interest, and academic performance in language learning. To effectively support Mandailing students in overcoming these challenges, educators and institutions must adopt a multifaceted approach that integrates explicit pronunciation instruction, affective support, immersive language experiences, professional development for educators, and curriculum review and revision.

Incorporating explicit pronunciation instruction into language teaching methodologies is essential for developing students' phonological awareness and accuracy. Regular pronunciation practice activities should be integrated into classroom routines to provide students with opportunities to refine their pronunciation skills in a supportive environment.

Additionally, providing affective support is crucial for addressing the anxiety and self-consciousness associated with pronunciation difficulties. Educators should create safe and encouraging learning environments where students feel comfortable experimenting with new pronunciation strategies and receiving constructive feedback.

Offering immersive language experiences, such as language clubs and conversation groups, allows students to practice their pronunciation skills in authentic contexts outside the classroom. These experiences reinforce language learning and provide students with exposure to natural speech patterns and models. Furthermore, investing in professional development for educators enhances their proficiency in teaching pronunciation effectively. Training sessions and workshops on pronunciation pedagogy equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed to support students in overcoming pronunciation challenges.

Finally, institutions should review and revise language education curricula to ensure that pronunciation instruction is adequately integrated and sequenced throughout the program. By prioritizing the development of students' pronunciation skills alongside other language competencies, institutions can create more inclusive and effective language learning environments. In conclusion, addressing pronunciation difficulties among Mandailing students requires collaborative efforts from educators, institutions, and students themselves to create supportive and empowering learning environments that foster pronunciation improvement and enhance language proficiency.

In summary, the study underscores the pervasive nature of pronunciation challenges among Mandailing students learning English and their profound impact on students' confidence, interest, and academic success in language learning. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates linguistic awareness, affective support, and targeted interventions. By fostering a positive learning environment and providing tailored support for pronunciation improvement, educators can empower Mandailing students to overcome confidence barriers and reignite their enthusiasm for English language learning, thereby enhancing their language proficiency and academic achievement.

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