

# Analysis of L1 Interference in Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) Students English Learning Process

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## ABSTRACT

This essay aims to analyze some L1 interference that occurred during NNES students' practical times using English. NNES students are local students who intake in international programs, in which they do content learning process in English. Lecturers use some approaches such as Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), or English as a medium of instruction (EMI). There is only a modest amount of empirical research supporting the effectiveness of such approaches. NNES students' common mistakes when using English in the process of learning is known as interference, in which the use of students' L1 influences the mistakes. This work used a survey method, samples in the form of written products, and conversation recording is taken randomly from international students majoring in accounting. There are at least three aspects of subsystem English language features analyzed; phonology, syntax, and lexicology. Data has shown that students use some language transfer for their L1 interference to influence their L2 output.

**Keywords:** L1 Interference, subsystem language feature, NNES, English Learning

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of higher education has been a global phenomenon over the past decades and has become an industry [1]. This program exists for several reasons: "a desire to promote understanding, the migration of skilled workers in a globalized economy, desire to generate additional revenues for institutions, or the need to build a more educated work-force in the home countries" [2]. Lecturers use some approaches such as Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), or English as a medium of instruction (EMI) to teach content to Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) students.

Despite its growth, there is only a modest amount of empirical research supporting the effectiveness of such approaches [3], [4] as supported by [5], the mixed results in some previous studies make it is hard to come to any conclusions about the CBI's effectiveness. Among others, language-related issues are one of the impediments in achieving the best results in international class programs, where a lack of English proficiency has influenced students' performance [6]. Learning language as at the same time understanding the courses' content can be challenging for late-learners, for variation in language experiences of students, such as the age of L2 acquisition will affect how the language is processed [7].

NNES students' common mistakes when using English in the process of learning is known as interference [8], in which the use of students' L1 influences the mistakes. Students' interference can involve any subsystem of language, such as sound and words' form. This essay aims to analyze some L1 interference that occurred during NNES students' practical times using English.

## 2. METHOD

It is primarily descriptive research using a survey method to pin down some English sentences produced by NNES students. There was no such context set to make them talk in English; therefore, all samples of words occurred naturally. Participants are accounting students who join the international program, and their level of English is A2 Elementary. The data were recorded and selected randomly. As [9] suggested, this study will get through some steps; collecting samples, identifying errors, describing errors, explaining and evaluating errors.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on casual conversations with students, samples of their short writing, and recording of their voice, there are at least three aspects of subsystem English language Based Based on casual conversations with students, samples of their short writing, and

recording of their voice, there are at least three aspects of subsystem English language features that can be analyzed. The analysis focuses on phonology, syntax, and lexicology aspect.

### **Feature 1**

The first language features aspect that hampers students' communication, specifically in speaking, is a segmental element in phonology, called a phoneme. [10] defines *phoneme* as the regularly used sounds which are broken into the smallest element, which then recognized as making a difference in meaning. [11] adds that a linguist records words as sequences of phonemes under a phonemic breakdown, and the result is termed into a phonemic transcription represented by a symbol enclosed by '/'.  
This transcription helps people understand phonemes in the human spoken production area regarding their relation to pronunciation. In general, [12] explains that there are approximately 44 phonemes in English whose positions can be identified at the beginning (initial sound), in the middle (media-sound), or the end (final sound). Moreover, people classify phonemes regarding their sound. The first is the vowels phonemes, such as /æ/ in *cat*, /ɪ/ in *pig*, /ʌ/ in *love*, /eɪ/ in *pain*, and /i:/ in *sweet*. The second phoneme is consonant phonemes, such as /h/ in *hate*, /b/ in *baby*, /f/ in *field*, /d/ in *dog* and /k/ in *kids*. Besides vowels and consonants phonemes, phoneme classification can be identified through the vocalic or controlled R phoneme, in which the vowel preceded the consonant /r/ (vowel + r).

In more detail, the phoneme /r/ is categorized as an approximant, a type of consonant which is rather difficult to describe [10]. This is an articulation in which the articulators approach each other but do not get sufficiently close to each other to produce a "complete" consonant such as a plosive, nasal or fricative. [12] classifies several categories for /r/ phoneme. First is called consonantal or pre-vocalic /r/. This phoneme presents as initial sound, for example, /r/ in *red*, *room*, and *rock*. The second category is /r/ blend in which this phoneme is preceded by other consonants, such as /pr/ in *price* and /br/ in *break*. The third category is named vocalic or controlled /r/, in which one or two vowels precede the /r/. This vocalic /r/'s are complex since they are comprised of 2 sounds: (the vowel + the /r/). Some vowels come before /r/, like ar, or, air, ear, ire, er. This kind of phoneme can be in medial such as *girl*, *born*, *hard* or in the final, such as *door* and *star*.

The medial vocalic /r/ phoneme is a feature that some students have difficulty with. They cannot produce a proper /r/ phoneme sound preceded by vowels, followed by another consonant. For example,

the word *Melbourne* in the sentence *Someday I wanna go to Melbourne*. The word *Melbourne* has a phoneme /r/, which is preceded by vowels /ou/ and followed by consonant /n/ (/ou+r+n/). Student 1 read this sentence as:

*\*/sʌm,deɪ aɪ 'wʌnə ɡoʊ tu 'melbrən /*

It sounds like the vowel /ou/ and the consonant /r/are reversed, making what he pronounced is not understandable. The correct sound is /sʌm,deɪ aɪ 'wʌnə ɡoʊ tu 'melbərən /.

The second example of the error is found in the word *work* in the sentence *My father don't*

*go because work in office*. Because the word *work* is a medial vocalic R where /r/ is preceded by /o/ then followed and ended with a consonant /k/, student 2 read that sentence as:

*\*/ 'maɪ 'faðər [don't] 'ɡoʊ bɪ'kɔz 'wək 'ɪn 'afəs /*

In this case, he omitted the sound of /r/. The correct pronunciation should be /'maɪ 'faðər [don't] 'ɡoʊ bɪ'kɔz 'wərk 'ɪn 'afəs/.

Third examples of such errors are the word *hard* and *mark* in the sentence *I want study here and I want get good mark*. For the word *hard*, instead of saying /'hard/, student 1 also omitted the /r/ sound and said it as *\*/had/*. For the word *mark*, he added the vowel /ə/ before consonant /k/, so it becomes *\*/marək/*, not */'mark/*

Compared with their L1, two points can be highlighted as to why some students cannot pronounce the words with medial vocalic /r/ correctly. First, while the English phoneme /r/ is a voiced post-alveolar approximant, Indonesia phoneme /r/ is an apical post-dental trill [13], so they make sound r with a solid and complete sound. Second, /r/ phoneme, which is followed and ended by any consonant, never exists in the Indonesian language. There is no significant error for the overall pronunciation of student 1 and student 2 words, except in the medial vocalic /r/ phoneme.

### **Feature 2**

The second language feature that becomes a barrier for some students to use English well found in their writing, seen from the syntax aspect, is tense. [14] define tense as a phenomenon. Languages have grammatical means to indicate when an action or event occurs or when a process holds.

Regarding its usage, there are three types of tense found. The first is present simple, the second one is present progressive, and the last one is perfect. The first tense is present simple. While [15] argues that it is used to express a 'present' time, [16] states that present

tense can be used for anything but the present time. Some present common characteristics are that no auxiliary verb is used, and the verb is the only main verb. Some of the verbs are regular, and others are irregular. Their usage depends on the subject. The second tense is the progressive aspect. Some typical situations for these uses include a situation in progress when speaking, describing ongoing events, changing or developing situations, and repeated events or situations. The third tense is the perfect aspect. [15] also notes the present perfect is used to suggest incompleteness of activities that started in the past and continued to present.

By referring to student 3's writing, she has basic knowledge about sentence structure. In general, she placed the proper word classes to create appropriate simple sentences, for example, *My name is M\*\*a* or *I come from Jakarta* in which verb is preceded by subject and complement or object is placed right after the verb. However, she does not have enough understanding to use several tenses properly in her writing. There are three types of tenses found within her writing, but almost all of them contain errors. In her first writing, she was asked to write her past activity. She started his paragraph with a correct past time indicator; *yesterday*. However, she made errors many times in formulating correct past tenses, and the errors lie within all of his sentences. For example, she wrote:

*\*Yesterday I go to supermarket with mother. My father don't go because work in office*

Besides having errors in writing the correct form of the present simple tense instead of past time, she even failed to formulate the correct sentence in the simple present tense, in which she missed –es form of verb of a third person. In English, the correct sentences should be

*Yesterday I went to supermarket with My father did not go because he was working in his office.*

In her second writing, she also made many errors. She was instructed to describe what she is doing now and what she will do in the future. Like in the first paragraph, she started her second writing with the correct time indicator; now. However, she mixes several tenses like present and progressive.

For example:

*\*Now I am wake up at 7. I playing with my cat. I am watching tv and eating..."*

Again, student 3 made double errors. She wrote progressive in the form of the simple present, and she

did formulate the wrong present simple sentence, too (I + am + wake). She produced correct tense of progressive; however, the rate is minimal. In this area of error, student 3 will get many barriers, both in receiving and conveying her idea, for she cannot place the time of his story well by using the wrong verb/tense.

### **Feature 3**

The last language feature that impedes students as English learners are the conjunction, as one of the lexicological aspects. In the language structure aspect, coherence and cohesion are essential parts needed to sequence relations between sentences and make them a unified whole that has sense and brings communicative purposes, particularly in writing. [17] explain the distinction between cohesion and coherence. While coherence makes a natural and logical connection between sentences, *cohesion* is defined as the state of coherence and uniting the text. When there is a connectedness in a text, there is cohesion in it [15] explains that connectedness is 'text forming devices. "...texts have 'text forming devices to function to connect sentences and to bind a text together into a complete whole, i.e., to make it 'cohesive'". Some devices make texts cohesive; lexical cohesion, reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions. Lexical cohesion is known as the lexical device, and reference, substitution, and ellipsis are categorized as grammatical devices. Conjunctions, on the other hand, are debatable regarding their function as grammatical or lexical. *Conjunctions* are a part of speech that connects words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. They refer to something backward or forward in the text, which provides the relationship between fragments in language. Because of their characteristic, [17] do not believe that conjunctions to be completely grammatical. Coordinating conjunctions join two independent clauses set off by a comma, for example, *or*, *and*, *but*. Subordinating conjunction has the role of connecting a dependent clause with an independent one by using the word *therefore*, or *on the other hand*. Phrase linkers are used in the beginning of sentence as an idea transition to the previous sentences like using *because*, *so...that*. Connectors also join independent clauses like what coordinating conjunctions do, but with a semicolon (;) or a period (.). The difference between connectors and other discourse markers is their positions' flexibility, initial, medial, and final position. Besides, [15] classifies several connectors based on their function. To show contrast, *However*, *On the other hand*, *Nevertheless* can be used. *Also*, *Moreover*, *Furthermore* are used as an additional category. *Then*, *First*, *Later*, *Afterwards* can be used to show a time sequence.

Here lie the errors made by Student 4. From his writings, there are only three conjunctions found; *because after that* and *and*. Moreover, he placed conjunctions wrongly, both from the frequency of using and the position of conjunction. The first example is

*\*I am buying food **and** I go home*

In this sentence, the process of paying came after buying, which means he connected two sequence ideas. The appropriate conjunction used is *then*, or *after that*. The correct sentence should be:

*I am buying food **then** I go home*

The second example of an error is he wrote *and* at the beginning of the sentence.

*\***And** after that I look festival with mother and I go home after I look festival.*

Conjunction *and* is used to combine two words or phrases or clauses or sentences in one sentence. Also, student 4 wrote *after that* right after the word, making there are two conjunctions there. The correct sentence is

*After that I look festival with mother.*

In his second writing, some misused conjunctions are also found. For example

*\*Now I am wake up at 7 morning **and** I don't take a bath. I only brush my teeth and I clean face*

*\*I am watching tv and eating **and** my cat don't want eat*

Both the first and the second sentence contain a contrasting idea, so he actually should rite *but* as the conjunction. The correct sentences are

*Now I am wake up at 7 morning **but** I don't take a bath. I only brush my teeth and I clean face*

*I am watching tv and eating **but** my dog don't want eat.*

This type of error relates closely to Indonesian habit in speaking, where conjunctions [lalu/trus/dan] are repetitively used to start a new sentence. It can be assumed that student 4 uses the word *and* excessively in his writing because he translated those Indonesian conjunctions into English.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study's purpose is to see how the Indonesian language (L1) interference plays some role in the process of English Learning (L2) in Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) context. Being international students who are required to use English in classrooms somehow gives students a chance to train their English skills. Still, it can drive to what it is called language transfer on specific subsystems of language features. This research suggests classroom instructors identify these interferences before they repeatedly occur and create a session in every meeting to highlight and fix the errors.

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