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Power and linguistic meritocracy: Dialect interference and symbolic capital among Sundanese-Banten EFL learners

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Abstract: The language diversity in Indonesia raises the phenomenon of language interference as occurs in Sundanese Banten students when speaking English as a global language. However, as language learning is never neutral, the process is oft-shaped by power relations and ideologies, while the result is often valued based on linguistic meritocracy. Therefore, as related to the Sundanese Banten dialect, this study aims: (1) to identify the types of dialectal interference that occur when Sundanese-Banten EFL learners speak English, and (2) to explore the system of values that emerges from linguistic meritocracy in relation to their pronunciation, as shaped by global society views. While using a qualitative method to find and analyze the dialectical interference; the Bourdieu theory, language accent as a symbolic power through linguistic meritocracy, is also used to explore the intersection between the language pronunciation reality, the linguistic meritocracy in it, and the societal system of value. After going through a series of analyses, there are seven primary interferences that internalized into the Sundanese Banten dialect, they are Lenition, Fornition, Syncope, Apocope, Epenthesis, and Prague as several intermittent letters were found such as [ð] changed to [d], [ɖʒ] to [g], [v] to [f], [z] to [s], and [r]. These interferences, while linguistically common, are socially charged; they reflect how systems of linguistic value classify learners according to perceived intelligence and cultural capital. In this sense, pronunciation becomes not merely a linguistic feature but a marker of social legitimacy and symbolic capital within the ideology of linguistic meritocracy.

Keywords: *Linguistic meritocracy, dialect interference, EFL learners, Sundanese-Banten*

INTRODUCTION

As a multicultural country evidenced by a variety of cultures and languages Suroso (2014), the majority of Indonesian people speak two languages, the local languages for the first language (L1) and Bahasa Indonesia as the national languages for the second language (L2) (Masykar et al, 2022). However, it has become entirely common for Indonesians to acquire a third language (L3), particularly English, given its status as an international language and its position as a crucial requirement for Indonesians' participation in the global community Prastikawati et al. (2025). However, can learning this third language truly occur without obstacles? Many scholars have found that acquiring a foreign language often involves various forms of conflict and interference in phonology, semantics, vocabulary, and even grammar, particularly in verbal communication (Syafutri & Saputra, 2021).

In most cases, regions that retain strong local wisdom have distinctive dialects that indicate the geographical origins of their speakers Prastikawati et al. (2025). This is rath-

er contradictory to the verbal language production observed among English speakers in urban areas; they tend to be better at adopting (or at least attempting to imitate) the original accents of the two major varieties of English most commonly taught internationally: the British and the American accents (Myers et al., 2024). However, can the influence of British and American accents also be observed among English speakers in areas adjacent to urban centers, where strong local linguistic features are still highly prominent?

As someone who spent part of his English language learning experience in Banten, one of the provinces directly bordering the Greater Jakarta area, the capital region of Indonesia. The author will, in this context, explore more deeply the dialectal interference that emerges and is experienced by native Banten speakers when using English as their third language. As an initial overview, Banten is a part of Java Island that was formerly included in West Java before being administratively separated in 2000 under Law Number 23 of 2000 (Saputra, 2021). Banten province consists of 4 cities, 4 regencies, 155 districts, with the following territorial restrictions: north with the Java Sea and east with Greater Jakarta and West Java. The majority of Banten residents have two primary dialects consisting of two languages, namely Javanese Banten Dialect and Sundanese Banten Dialect as their first language dialects (Statistics Indonesia, 2024).

Based on the interference that occurs which includes phonological interference, morphology and semantics can be taken for example in phonological interference there are similarities between Banten Dialect (BD) including Sundanese and English, the transition from L1 to L3 is not always advantageous a few English sounds are unavailable from the BD phonological systems. Sundanese speakers, for example, a tendency to alter the labiodental fricatives /f, v/ to bilabial stops /p/ when they pronounce “Consultative” [Kənˈsʌltətɪv] they pronounce [Kənˈsʌltətɪp]. This issue is caused by the lack of sound in BD, which is difficult to overcome even for college students who have been studying English for years (Rohyani, 2020). Thus, the first question raises in this paper is: what kinds of dialectal interference are embedded in the English pronunciation of Sundanese-Banten EFL learners?

Moreover, when discussing dialectal intervention in an individual’s production of verbal English communication, the author is also wondering how this phenomenon becomes one of the tenets in the formation of a community’s system of values, as stated by Flores and Saldívar García (2020) that there is a belief called linguistic meritocracy that defines language proficiency, especially in global languages like English, as an objective indicator of intelligence, effort, and merit. In this case, scholars have shown that linguistic meritocracy functions as a mechanism of social stratification, where speakers who approximate “standard” or “native-like” English are perceived as more educated, global, and competent, while those whose speech reflects local dialects or accents are often viewed as deficient (Bour-

dieu, 1991; Phillipson, 1992). Therefore, the second question in this paper is: how does linguistic meritocracy, grounded in dialectal interference among English learners in Banten, contribute to the formation of a system of values within the community?

Linguistic Meritocracy and the Symbolic of Power

In many societies, language ability becomes a central marker of merit and social worth. This phenomenon is often described as *linguistic meritocracy*, which operates through the belief that individuals who speak the "right" language or the "proper" variety deserve greater respect, opportunities, and mobility. However, merit is actually not acquired from the abilities itself, but from the fact that capabilities can play a certain role in society (Daniels, 1978). As a light example, (Daniels, 1978) mentioned the use of meritocracy can bring more opportunities in particular jobs in society. It is because somehow job seekers, who are meritocrats, select people who can perform the overall assigned jobs maximally; and they think that people with high merit carry the aspects of being more performed in jobs in general situations.

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, language is not a neutral tool but a form of symbolic resource that carries value within specific social fields. Speakers who command prestigious languages or standardized forms accumulate symbolic power, while those who use marginalized dialects or non-dominant languages often experience devaluation. Through these mechanisms, schooling, workplaces, and everyday interactions reproduce subtle hierarchies, where mastery of certain linguistic forms becomes a proxy for intelligence, civility, or professionalism. In this way, linguistic meritocracy reinforces existing social inequalities by naturalizing language-based judgments as fair and merit-based, even though they reflect historically produced power relations (Bourdieu, 1991).

In their research, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) also pointed out that schools and other key institutions in society possess certain norms and rules, most of which are unwritten regarding how individuals are expected to behave, speak, dress, and think. Lie et al. (2024) mentioned that this phenomenon also applies in Indonesia. Children who are born and raised with higher cultural capital tend to be perceived as more successful within society, as they benefit from greater opportunities to develop the merit-based skills expected of them through supportive educational environments and social settings. The notion of cultural capital proposed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) is evident in English language teaching and learning, where proficiency in "good English" functions as a valued cultural resource, whereas insufficient mastery of English is perceived as a form of deficit. As Maryns and Blommaert (2002) also stated, every difference in an individual's communicative practices is evaluated differently by society, with each being assigned a distinct "value", either positive or negative.

METHOD

This study analyzes phonological interference in non-English students, specifically focusing on English word pronunciation accuracy as a percentage. It evaluates the types of interference that occur in second language learning, contrasting the phonological systems of the native language (L1) and English (L2). It's a field study collecting data from informants in the community for analysis. The type of method applied in this research is the qualitative method. Qualitative research is a technique for exploring and fully understanding the importance that groups or individuals place on a social or individual condition (Creswell. J.W., 2017). This study analyzes phonological interference in non-English students, specifically focusing on English word pronunciation accuracy as a percentage. It evaluates the types of interference that occur in second language learning, contrasting the phonological systems of the native language (L1) and English (L2). It's a field study collecting data from informants in the community for analysis. This research will be conducted with EFL students at the English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, located in Serang, Banten. This setting was selected due to accessibility and the university's facilities. The study involves a sample of 10 students who speak the Sundanese Banten Dialect as their mother language.

In this research, data collection methods include interviews, observations, and documentation. Observations were conducted among EFL students at the English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten State Islamic University. EFL students were chosen due to their interest in learning English as a second language, some being Sundanese speakers who aspire to become English teachers. The study examines their English pronunciation and the obstacles they face. The observation process spanned almost a semester, resulting in the selection of 10 qualified respondents who have been immersed in the Sundanese Banten dialect for over 5 years and have parental connections to Banten. Questionnaires were used to gather bio-data and explore language usage patterns, while English texts were provided for reading and recording. Interference was identified by converting recordings into International Phonetic Transcription (IPA) and marking words exhibiting interference.

The final step involves analyzing the gathered data, using articulatory phonetics due to the study's focus on language formation. Qualitative methods, relying on text and images Kumar and Garg (2019), aim to investigate specific techniques used in certain settings. Discrepancies in phonological systems lead to pronunciation issues in a foreign language. IPA symbols transcribed and evaluated the data. Pronunciation mistakes were identified by comparing phonetic transcriptions of English and Sundanese. The analysis categorized phonological interference in the sequence of articulation, covering plosives, fricatives, nasals, affricates, trills, laterals, and

approximants. A table displayed correct English phonetic transcriptions alongside informants' transcriptions and percentages, demonstrating interference. The study also revealed phonological processes in problematic English sounds based on Crowneley's theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English Consonant Phonological Interference Process by Sundanese Banten Dialect Students

Some interference occurs from the respondents who are Sundanese Banten Dialect Students when they speak in English. This phenomenon occurs because there are differences in the pronunciation system between English and Sundanese Banten Dialect (Risdianto, 2017). Not only in consonants, but the interference also happened in vowels between the two languages. In addition to differences in the pronunciation system, interference also occurs because some letters are not present in the Sundanese Banten Dialect language, resulting in students replacing these letters with the closest letters they usually use in the Sundanese Banten Dialect or even in their second language, namely Indonesian. Some interference processes that occur will be described below.

The Pronunciation [ð] changed to [d]

The [ð] consonant, often found in English words like "that" [ðæt] or "then" [ðæn], poses challenges in Sundanese Banten Dialect due to its absence. Sundanese speakers often replace [ð] with [t] or [d]. See Table 1 for [ð] pronunciation changes to [d].

Table 1. Pronunciation Table [ð] changed to [d]

English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations
That	[ðæt]	/dət/	ð → d
Than	[ðæn]	/dæn/	ð → d
Rather	['rɑːðə]	/'rɑːdər/	ð → d
Then	[ðæn]	/dæn/	ð → d

Table 1 illustrates interference in Sundanese Banten Dialect pronunciation, particularly with consonant [ð]. This occurs naturally as [ð] is absent in the Sundanese Banten Dialect but exists in English, as in "then" [ðæn], which may change to /tæn/ in the Sundanese Banten Dialect. The change observed is often from [ð] to [d] or [t]. Many words containing [ð], like "that" [ðæt], are pronounced as /dæt/ due to this interference.

The Pronunciation [ʤ] changed to [g]

The consonant [ʤ] is common in English words, often originating from [g], as seen in "agency" ['eɪʤənsi]. In Sundanese Banten Dialect, [ʤ] exists, but its source differs from English. English uses [g], while the Sundanese

Banten Dialect usually derives [ʤ] from [j]. This distinction leads to interference when speakers of the Sundanese Banten Dialect pronounce English.

Table 2. Pronunciation Table [ʤ] changed to [g]

English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations
Agency	[ˈeɪʤənsi]	/ˈegənsi/	ʤ → **g**
Antigen	[æntɪʤən]	/æntɪgən/	ʤ → **g**
Emergency	[ɪˈmɜːʤənsi]	/ɪˈmɜːgənsi/	ʤ → **g**

Table 2 demonstrates interference in Sundanese Banten Dialect pronunciation, particularly with consonant [ʤ]. This arises because [ʤ] is absent in the Sundanese Banten Dialect. In English, [ʤ] originates from [g], as in "Emergency" [ɪˈmɜːʤənsi], which may change to /ɪˈmɜːgənsi/ in Sundanese Banten Dialect. Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers often replace [ʤ] with [g], as seen in "antigen" [æntɪʤən], pronounced as /æntɪgən/

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The Pronunciation [v] changed to [f]

The consonant [v], commonly found in English words like "travelers" [ˈtrævləz], is inherent to English but absent in Sundanese Banten Dialect's consonant system. In the Sundanese Banten Dialect, speakers often replace [v] with [f] when pronouncing it in English due to their unfamiliarity with the [v] sound in their language.

Table 3 Pronunciation Table [v] changed to [f]

English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations
Virus	[vaɪrəs]	/faɪrəs/	**v → f**
Variants	[ˈveərɪənts]	/feərɪənts/	**v → f**
Virulent	[ˈvɪrʊlənt]	/ˈfɪrʊlənt/	**v → f**
Availability	[əˌveɪləˈbɪlɪti]	/əˌfeɪləˈbɪlɪti/	**v → f**
Division	[dɪˈvɪʒən]	/dɪˈfɪʒən/	**v → f**
However	[haʊˈɛvə]	/ˈhaʊˈɛfə/	**v → f**
Believes	[bɪˈliːvz]	/bɪˈliːf /	**v → f**

Table 3 illustrates interference in Sundanese Banten Dialect pronunciation, particularly with consonant [v]. While the English consonant system includes [v], Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers, who rarely use [v], often replace it with [f]. For instance, "believes" [bɪˈliːvz] changes to /bɪˈliːf/, substituting [v] with [f]. This interference occurs not only in English but also in Indonesian pronunciation.

The Pronunciation [z] changed to [s] and [r]

The consonant [z], frequently found in English words like "is" [iz], is original to English but absent in Sundanese Banten Dialect's consonant system. In English, [z] usually originates from words containing [z] or [s], and it differs from [s] in being pronounced with vibrations. Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers often encounter interference when pronouncing [z] in English, primarily because the pronunciation of [s] as [z] in English is not always intuitive, leading to mispronunciations.

Table 4. Pronunciation Table [z] changed to [s] and [r]

English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations
Activities	[ækˈtɪvɪtiz]	/ækˈtɪfɪtis/	**z → s**
Responses	[rɪsˈpɒnsɪz.]	/rɪsˈpɒns/	**z → s**
Was	[wɒz]	/wɒs/	**z → s**
Indicators	[ɪndɪkeɪtəz]	/ɪndɪkeɪtər/	**z → r**
Numbers	[ˈnʌmbəz]	/ˈnʌmbər/	**z → r**

Table 4 depicts interference in Sundanese Banten Dialect pronunciation, particularly with consonant [z]. In the English consonant system, [z] originates from [s] or [rs] at the end of words. However, the Sundanese Banten Dialect's pronunciation system includes [z] exclusively, so interference occurs when pronouncing [z] in English. For instance, "was" [waz] changes to /was/, replacing [z] with [s] in alignment with the Sundanese Banten Dialect's pronunciation. Additionally, [z] may change to [r], as in "indicators" [ɪndɪkeɪtəz], which becomes [ɪndɪkeɪtər] due to the absence of [rs] in Sundanese Banten Dialect's pronunciation system, leading to the substitution of [r] for [z].

The results align with the research conducted by Risdianto (2017) who proved that phonological interferences do exist in the context of second language acquisition and it affects learners' pronunciation (Smith, 2018). The interference can be seen from the change in pronunciation when they pronounce [ð] and change to [d], the pronunciation [ʤ] changed to [g], the pronunciation [v] changed to [f] and the last is the pronunciation [z] changed to [s] and [r]. Fifit Rohyani (2021) also explained that there are interferences such as the pronunciation [v] changed to [f]. This finding reinforces previous studies showing that interference frequently occurs in multilingual societies where people are learning a foreign language (Magiste, 1985). One primary reason for this is the differences between language systems that result in the interference or inaccuracy of a person in reciting something, which Hayes-Harb et al. (2010) called it as an "inconsistency".

The Interference and Sound change in the Sundanese Banten Dialect

Lenition in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The first type of sound change is lenition, which involves weakening a letter and transforming it into a softer or weaker sound (Crowley, 1997). This phenomenon is common among bilinguals and multilingual individuals due to differences in language systems between the languages they know. For instance, when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, lenition often occurs as their first language interferes, leading to changes in their English pronunciation.

Table 5. Lenition in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The Type of Sound Change	SUNDANESE BANTEN DIALECT (SBD)				
	English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	deviations	Frequency
Lenition 1	Responses	[rɪsˈpɒnsɪz.]	/rɪsˈpɒns/	z → s	1
Lenition 2	Activities	[ækˈtɪvɪtiz]	/ækˈtɪfɪtis/	z → s	4
	Was	[wɒz]	/wɒs/	z → s	
	Availability	[əˌveɪləˈbɪlɪti]	/əˌfeɪləˈbɪlɪti/	v → ˌf	
	Variants	[ˈveərɪənts]	/feərɪənts/	v → f	
Lenition 9	However	[haʊˈɛvə]	/ˈ haʊˈɛfə/	v → f	6
	Division	[dɪˈvɪʒən]	/dɪˈfɪʒən/	v → f	
	Current	[ˈkʌrənt]	/ˈʃʊrənt/	k → ˈʃ	
	Achieved	[əˈʧiːvd]	/əˈsiːvd/	ʧ → s	
	Virulent	[ˈvɪrʊlənt]	/ˈfɪrʊlənt/	v → f	
Lenition 10	Little	[ˈliːθəl]	/ˈleːtəl/	θ → t	1

Lenition can occur randomly and affect letters with similar sounds, such as [v] changing to [f] or [i] becoming [e]. Detecting the lenition involves examining changes in pronunciation tone and stress; a decrease in pitch height indicates weakening, as per Crowley's theory. Additionally, lenition can be identified by observing a decrease in letter pressure. For instance, in the word "achieved" [əˈʧiːvd], the consonant [ʧ] weakens to [s] [əˈsiːvd]. The table highlights the frequent occurrence of lenition when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English.

Fornition in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The second type of sound change is fortition, which is the opposite of lenition. Fortition involves strengthening a letter or transforming it into a stronger sound (Crowley, 1997). Like the lenition, this phenomenon is common among bilinguals and multilingual individuals due to differences in the language systems of the languages they know. Similarly, when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, there can be interference or changes influenced by their first language, resulting in modifications to their English pronunciation, although not as frequently as lenition.

Table 6. Fornition in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The Type of Sound Change	SUNDANESE BANTEN DIALECT (SBD)				
	English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviation	Frequency
Fornition 1	Then	[ðæn]	/dæn/	ð → d	2
	Rather	[ˈrɑːðə]	/ˈrɑːdər/	ð → d	
Fornition 9	Then	[ðæn]	/dæn/	ð → d	1

Table 6 provides examples of vowel and consonant strengthening, a phenomenon known as fortition, which occurs intermittently due to interference when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English. Fortition can affect letters with similar sounds, such as [ð] changing to [d] or [ð] becoming [t]. Detecting fortition involves observing changes in pronunciation tone and stress; an increase in pitch height indicates strengthening, as per Crowley's theory. Additionally, fortition can be identified by observing an increase in letter pressure. For instance, in the word "activities" [ækˈtɪvɪtiz], the consonant [z] strengthens to [s] /ækˈtɪfɪtis/. The table highlights the frequent occurrence of fortition when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, although it's not as common as lenition.

Syncope in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The third type of sound change is syncope, which involves the omission of sounds or letters that occur in the middle of a word (Crowley, 1997). This phenomenon is common among bilinguals and multilingual individuals due to differences in the language systems of the languages they know. Similarly, when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, there can be interference or changes influenced by their first language, resulting in modifications to their English pronunciation through syncope.

Table 7. Syncope in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The Type of Sound Change	SUNDANESE BANTEN DIALECT (SBD)				
	English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations	frequency
Syncope 4	Pursued	[pəˈsjuːd]	/pəˈsuːd/	j → (-)	1
Syncope 7	Transportation	[trænspɔːˈteɪʃən]	/trænpɔːˈteɪʃən/	s → (-)	2
	Population	[pɒpjʊˈleɪʃən]	/pɒpʊˈleɪʃən/	j → (-)	
Syncope 9	Inspection	[ɪnˈspɛkʃən]	/ɪnˈpɛkʃən/	s → (-)	1
Syncope 10	Masks	[mɑːsks]	/mɑːs/	k → (-)	1

Table 7 illustrates the phenomenon known as syncope, which involves the disappearance of letters or sounds within a word. Syncope typically occurs due to the unavailability of a specific letter in a language, leading to interference or pronunciation differences. This can result in the omission of

a letter when speaking English. For example, in the table above, the word "transportation" ([trænspɔːˈteɪʃən]) is pronounced as /trænpɔːˈteɪʃən/, where the letter [s] in the middle of the word is omitted, demonstrating syncope.

Apocope in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The fourth type of sound change is apocope, which involves the omission of sounds or letters at the end of a word (Crowley, 1997). This phenomenon is common among bilinguals and multilingual individuals due to differences in the language systems of the languages they know. Similarly, when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, there can be interference or changes influenced by their first language, resulting in modifications to their English pronunciation through apocope.

Table 8. Apocope in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The Type of Sound Change	SUNDANESE BANTEN DIALECT (SBD)				
	English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations	Frequency
Apocope 1	Cases	[ˈkeɪsɪz]	/ˈkeɪs/	ɪz ⟶ (-)	2
	Optimistic	[ɒptɪˈmɪstɪk]	/ɒptɪˈmɪs/	tɪk ⟶ (-)	
Apocope 3	indonesian	[ɪndəʊˈniːzɪən]	/ɪndəʊˈniːzɪə/	n ⟶ (-)	1
Apocope 4	Government	[ˈgʌvnmənt]	/ˈgʌvnmən/	t ⟶ (-)	1
Apocope 7	Areas	[ˈeərɪəz]	/ˈeərɪa/	z ⟶ (-)	2
	Indicators	[ˈɪndɪkeɪtəz]	/ˈɪndɪkeɪtə/	z ⟶ (-)	
Apocope 8	Effect	[ɪˈfɛkt]	/ɪˈfɛk/	t ⟶ (-)	1
Apocope 9	Dead	[dɛθ]	/dɛ/	θ ⟶ (-)	1
Apocope 10	Means	[miːnz]	/miːn/	z ⟶ (-)	1

Table 8 shows Omission at the end of the word or Crowley calls it Apocope. Apocope is a disappearance that occurs at the end of a word. This omission occurs usually because the unavailability of a letter in the language causes interference or differences in pronunciation and can also result in the omission of a letter when they speak in English the example of Apocope which is very likely to occur is in the example table above it appears that they pronounce the "policy" which is pronounced [ˈpɒlɪs i] and changes to /ˈpɒlɪs/ visible letter [i] at the end of the word are missing and has Apocope.

Epenthesis in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The fifth type of sound change is epenthesis, which involves the addition of sounds or letters in the middle of a word (Crowley, 1997). This phenomenon is common among bilinguals and multilingual individuals due to differences in the language systems of the languages they know. Similarly, when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, there can be interference or changes influenced by their first language, resulting in modifications to their English pronunciation through epenthesis.

Table 9. Epenthesis in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The Type of Sound Change	SUNDANESE BANTEN DIALECT (SBD)				
	English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations	Frequency
Epenthesis 1	Government	[gʌvnmənt]	/gʌvrnmənt/	(-) → r	1
Epenthesis 3	Government	[gʌvnmənt]	/gʌvrmənt/	(-) → r	3
	Travelers	[ˈtrævləz]	/ˈtrævrləz/	(-) → r	
	under control	[ˈʌndə kənˈtrəʊl.]	/ˈʌndərkənˈtrəʊl/	(-) → r	
Epenthesis 7	Oversea	[ˌəʊvəˈsiːz]	/ˌəʊvərsiːz/	(-) → r	3
	According	[əˈkɔːdɪŋ]	/əˈkɔrdɪŋ/	(-) → r	

Table 9 shows the Addition in the middle of the word or what Crowley calls Epenthesis. Epenthesis is an addition that occurs in the middle of a word. This addition occurs usually because the unavailability of a letter in the language causes interference or differences in pronunciation and can also result in the omission of a letter when they speak in English example Epenthesis which is very likely to occur is as in the example table above it appears they pronounce "travelers" which is pronounced [ˈtrævləz] and changed to [ˈtrævr ləz] It can be seen that there is an addition of the letter [r] in the middle of the letter word. This phenomenon occurs usually because the English word contains a silent letter but by Sundanese Banten Dialect, the speaker is still pronounced so it does not sound unusual.

Paragogue in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The sixth type of sound change is paragoge, which involves the addition of sounds or letters at the end of a word (Crowley, 1997). This phenomenon is common among bilinguals and multilingual individuals due to differences in the language systems of the languages they know. Similarly, when Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers speak English, there can be interference or changes influenced by their first language, resulting in modifications to their English pronunciation through paragoge.

Table 10. Paragogue in Sundanese Banten Dialect

The Type of Sound Change	SUNDANESE BANTEN DIALECT (SBD)				
	English Word	Phonetic Transcription	Respondents Pronunciation	Deviations	Frequency
Paragogue 1	After	[ˈɑːftə]	/ˈɑːftər/	(-) → r	3
	Longer	[ˈlɒŋgə]	/ˈlɒŋgər/	(-) → r	
	Booster	[ˈbuːstə]	/ˈbuːstər/	(-) → r	
Paragogue 2	Bogor	[bɒgə]	/bɒgər/	(-) → r	1
Paragogue 3	However	[haʊˈɛvə]	/haʊˈɛvər/	(-) → r	2
	Even though	[ˈiːvən ðəʊ]	/ˈiːvən ðəʊg/	(-) → g	
Paragogue 6	Longer	[ˈlɒŋgə]	/ˈlɒŋgər/	(-) → r	1
Paragogue 8	Though	[ðəʊ]	/ðəʊh/	(-) → h	2
	High	[haɪ]	/haɪg/	(-) → g	

Table 10 illustrates the phenomenon known as paragoge, which involves the addition of sounds or letters at the end of a word. This addition typically occurs due to differences in pronunciation or interference influenced by the speaker's first language. In the example provided, the word "however" [haʊˈɛvə] is pronounced as /haʊˈɛvər/, indicating the addition of the letter [r] at the end of the word. This phenomenon often occurs when English words contain silent letters, but Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers tend to pronounce them, resulting in the addition of sounds to the word.

The above results explain the existence of interference and its classification according to Crowley's theories used to classify the data that has been collected shows that there are some interferences in EFL Banten students pronunciation: Lenition, Fornition, Syncope, Apocope, Epenthesis, and Paragogue interference. However, some interferences are not found there, such as Apheresis, Unusual sound changes, Fission, Fusion, Tone changes, Dissimilation, Assimilation, breaking, and Metathesis. Van Heuven et al. (1998) called some interferences that sometimes appear as "accidentally lexical borrowing" in his research. In this case, some interference that was analyzed from the many samples occurs only once, showing the absence of consistency and frequency which only once shows the actual interference in some parts such as metathesis. Meanwhile, the unusual sound change is interference that rarely occurs. These results align with the work of Baker et al., (2011) who also found that the unusual sound change rarely occurs.

Social System of Value based on Linguistic Meritocracy associated with the EFL Learners Sundanese Banten Dialect

As several forms of dialect interference have been identified in the pronunciation of EFL learners in Banten, this results in their pronunciation (in certain cases) not meeting the standards of what is considered 'good' pronunciation within the English-learning community. These noticeable differences in pronunciation [v] which in some English words involve consonants shifting to [f], [i] changing to [e], or the omission of certain sounds leading to less clear pronunciation compared to English learners from other dialectal backgrounds (outside Banten) become factors in constructing assumptions of what is considered good or deficient. In the classroom, these features influence a learner's academic assessment in terms of English-speaking ability, where such grading becomes one of the components in determining an individual's meritocracy.

In Bourdieu's concept of linguistic meritocracy, social inequalities persist by naturalizing language-based judgments as fair and merit-based (Bourdieu, 1991). The unfairness here does not lie solely in the use of merit-based evaluation; indeed, to some extent, many argue that such evaluation is reasonably fair (for example, when individuals are recruited into the workforce or accepted into scholarship programs based on merit). Rather, the inequity emerges from the unequal distribution of resources that indi-

viduals possess in developing their linguistic and academic potential. As Daniels (1978) noted, fair equality of opportunity requires not only the removal of negative constraints but also the implementation of positive measures that enable individuals with fewer resources to compete as effectively as those who have greater advantages.

This leads to the broader question of inequality when the privileged position assigned to English in a multilingual country like Indonesia encounters the issue of limited access to foreign-language education in regions outside major urban centers. As Sandel (2021) also argue, he challenged the concept of meritocracy as a system that assigns social value and desirable social roles based on merit. Although merit-based hiring may appear equitable, they contend that some individuals have far greater opportunities to develop and demonstrate their talents than others. In a simple way, people do not have genuinely equal opportunities to cultivate their abilities before being labeled as 'high-merit individual.

This phenomenon is evident among English learners who speak the Sundanese–Banten dialect when they enter the workforce or environments dominated by meritocratic standards. Geographically, although Banten is located near the capital city of Jakarta, several regions such as Lebak, Pandeglang, and Serang, which serve as the research sites for this study on EFL learners' pronunciation are still classified as underdeveloped areas (Detik News, August 2025), which indicating a lack of resources for the development of English as a foreign language in these regions. Consequently, due to the existing system of value that evaluates individuals based on linguistic merit, it is not surprising that some English speakers who do not meet the expected standards of English pronunciation are labeled as having 'not merit enough' within society or in the workforce. This labeling is closely tied to symbolic capital and is reflected, for instance, in difficulties securing employment as the previous statement, as discussed earlier.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has examined the phenomenon of phonological interference in Sundanese Banten Dialect students when they speak English. The findings reveal that there is indeed interference in the pronunciation of English consonants, and this interference can be attributed to differences in the phonological systems of the two languages. The interference observed in this study can be categorized into various types, including lenition, fortition, syncope, apocope, epenthesis, and paragoge, which are influenced by the pronunciation of Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers. The study provides valuable insights into the specific phonological challenges faced by Sundanese Banten Dialect students when learning English. It underscores the impact of linguistic differences on pronunciation and highlights the complexity of language interference in multilingual contexts. Moreover, the study aligns with previous research findings on language in-

terference, validating the existence of these phonological changes in a multilingual setting. However, it also reveals that some types of interference are infrequent and lack consistency, indicating the nuanced nature of language interference. In summary, this research contributes to our understanding of language interference and its manifestations in the context of Sundanese Banten Dialect students learning English. It emphasizes the importance of considering phonological differences when addressing pronunciation challenges in multilingual education. Further research could explore strategies to mitigate these interferences and enhance language learning outcomes for such students.

Furthermore, the findings also illuminate how phonological interference interacts with broader social systems of value shaped by linguistic meritocracy. The pronunciation patterns produced by Sundanese Banten Dialect speakers are not merely linguistic variations but become socially interpreted as indicators of intelligence, capability, and cultural capital. As demonstrated, linguistic meritocracy naturalizes these judgments as if they were fair and merit-based, despite the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities experienced by learners in geographically and socioeconomically marginalized regions. This reinforces Bourdieu's argument that symbolic power operates through everyday linguistic practices, where certain accents are legitimized while others are devalued. In this context, the English pronunciation challenges observed among Sundanese Banten EFL learners contribute to unequal perceptions of merit, influencing academic evaluation and future access to social mobility. Therefore, beyond documenting phonological interference, this study underscores the need to critically examine how language ideologies reproduce social inequality within multilingual educational settings and highlights the importance of equitable language-learning support for speakers of non-dominant dialects.

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