

## **Phonological Interference in Acehese-English Learners at IAIN Langsa: An Analysis Using an Optimality Theory**

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In Indonesia, multilingualism is a common phenomenon, with individuals frequently alternating between various languages and dialects in their daily lives. In this context, people often acquire vocabulary in their second (L2) or third (L3) languages alongside their native language (L1). This study seeks to examine the key linguistic features influenced by multilingual learners at IAIN Langsa and to explore how Optimality Theory can provide insights into these patterns of interaction within the language learning processes of students, particularly those in the English Education Department.

The research focuses on the linguistic behaviour of multilingual learners fluent in Acehese, Bahasa Indonesia, and English at IAIN Langsa. Data collection involved fieldwork, interviews, and audio recordings, with four students serving as the primary subjects. By narrowing the focus to these four individuals, the study aims to deliver an in-depth analysis of phonological interference and the dynamics of multilingualism, offering valuable contributions to the fields of linguistics and language education.

The findings reveal that dynamic language interference significantly impacts multilingual learners in the English Education Department at IAIN Langsa. Specifically, Acehese students' pronunciation patterns influence their articulation of English words. For example, the phoneme /t/ is pronounced as /th/ in words like tea (/ti:/), photo (/ˈfəʊ.təʊ/), and tooth (/to:θ/), which become /t<sup>h</sup>i:/, /ˈfəʊ.t<sup>h</sup>əʊ/, and /to:θ/, respectively.

The study highlights that multilingual learners often transfer pronunciation patterns, intonation, and accentual features from their native languages into their target language. This transfer can lead to pronunciation challenges and difficulties in fully acquiring the phonological system of the target language.

**Keywords:** Multilingualism, Linguistic interference, Optimality theory