

Indonesian Language Interference in the Kaili Language of the Rai Dialect in Sipeso, Sindue Tobata District, Donggala Regency

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia is recognized as one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with hundreds of regional languages spoken across its archipelago. This study aims to describe the forms of Indonesian language interference in the Rai dialect of the Kaili language used in daily community communication. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected through observation, recording, and note-taking techniques from speakers of the Rai dialect of the Kaili language. The data were analyzed by identifying, classifying, and describing the forms of interference found in the utterances. The results revealed four forms of interference, namely lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological interference. Lexical interference was indicated by the inclusion of Indonesian vocabulary in Rai dialect utterances. Morphological interference appeared in the use of word-formation elements influenced by Indonesian. Syntactic interference was reflected in sentence structures influenced by Indonesian patterns, while phonological interference appeared in sound changes in the speakers' utterances. The findings indicate that the simultaneous use of two languages in daily communication contributes to the occurrence of Indonesian language interference in the Rai dialect of the Kaili language.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is recognized as one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with hundreds of regional languages spoken across its archipelago. Regional languages serve not only as a means of daily communication but also as an important component of cultural identity and local wisdom. The preservation and use of regional languages contribute significantly to maintaining linguistic diversity and cultural heritage within Indonesian society (Mustika & Wibowo, 2023; Nugraha et al., 2022). At the same time, Bahasa Indonesia functions as the national language and is widely used in education, government, media, and interethnic communication. Consequently, most Indonesians

live in a bilingual environment where regional languages and Bahasa Indonesia are used alternately depending on the communicative context (Rahmawati et al., 2023; Sari & Prasetyo, 2024).

The widespread use of two languages in everyday communication has attracted considerable attention in sociolinguistic studies. Bilingual communities often experience interactions between languages that influence language choice and language use patterns. These interactions may occur because speakers frequently switch between languages according to social situations, educational backgrounds, and communication needs (Kurniawan & Lestari, 2021; Fauzi et al., 2024). Such conditions create opportunities for language contact, which can lead to various linguistic phenomena, including code-switching, code-mixing, language shift, and interference (Putri & Handayani, 2023).

One of the regional languages spoken in Central Sulawesi is the Kaili language, which consists of several dialects, including the Rai dialect. The Kaili Rai dialect is actively used by community members in daily interactions, particularly within family and neighborhood settings. However, social and technological developments have significantly influenced language use among speakers. The increasing dominance of Bahasa Indonesia in education, digital communication, social media, and public services has gradually affected the use of regional languages, including the Kaili Rai dialect (Hasanah et al., 2022; Yuliana & Fitriani, 2024). As a result, linguistic elements of Bahasa Indonesia are frequently incorporated into regional language speech.

Language interference is one of the most common consequences of language contact in bilingual communities. Interference occurs when elements of one language influence the structure or usage of another language used by the same speaker. Recent studies suggest that language interference frequently emerges among bilingual speakers due to the intensity of language contact and the unequal prestige between languages (Rahman et al., 2022; Syahputra & Anwar, 2023). Interference may appear at various linguistic levels, including phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical aspects of language use (Wahyuni et al., 2021; Nurdiana & Pramesti, 2024).

The growing influence of Bahasa Indonesia on regional languages has become an important concern in language maintenance studies. Several researchers have reported that increased exposure to Bahasa Indonesia through formal education, mass media, and digital platforms contributes to changes in regional language usage patterns, particularly among younger generations (Aulia et al., 2021; Firmansyah et al., 2023). This situation may lead to a decline in the consistent use of regional languages and increase the occurrence of language interference in everyday communication.

Previous studies have identified various forms of interference between Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages in different regions of Indonesia. Research conducted by Hidayat and Kurniawati (2021) found lexical and syntactic interference in bilingual speakers' daily conversations. Similarly, Pratiwi et al. (2023) reported that frequent interaction between Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages resulted in significant linguistic interference among community members. These findings indicate that interference remains a relevant issue in multilingual societies and deserves further investigation, particularly in regional languages that have received limited scholarly attention.

Despite the growing number of studies on language interference, research focusing on the influence of Bahasa Indonesia on the Kaili Rai dialect remains limited. Therefore, investigating this phenomenon is important to understand how national language usage affects local language practices among Kaili Rai speakers. This study aims to identify and analyze the forms of Bahasa Indonesia interference found in the speech of Kaili Rai dialect speakers. The findings are expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies, particularly in the areas of language contact, bilingualism, and regional language maintenance, while also providing insights into the linguistic dynamics of multilingual communities in Central Sulawesi.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The descriptive approach is used because this study aims to describe systematically and factually the phenomenon of Indonesian interference in the use of the Rai dialect Kaili by the people in Sipeso, Sindue Tobata District, Donggala Regency. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research is a research method used to examine the natural conditions of objects, where researchers act as key instruments. Through a descriptive approach, the researcher tries to describe the forms of language interference that appear in people's speech without manipulating the object being studied.

The qualitative approach was chosen because the data in this study is in the form of people's oral speech that contains linguistic elements. The data is not presented in the form of numbers or statistics, but in the form of words, phrases, and sentences that are analyzed in depth. According to Moleong (2018), qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically and describe them in the form of words in a special natural context.

Through a qualitative descriptive method, the researcher observed the use of the Rai dialect Kaili language influenced by Indonesian in people's daily communication. With this approach, researchers can identify different forms of language interference that appear in public speech and explain the function of their use in communication. According to Sudaryanto (2015), the descriptive method is used to describe linguistic facts found in the field systematically and accurately. Thus, this study aims to clearly describe the phenomenon of Indonesian interference in the Kaili language of the Rai dialect used by the community in Sipeso, Sindue Tobata District, Donggala Regency

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted on the Kaili language speaking community of the Rai dialect, it was found that there was interference of the Kaili language on the use of Indonesian in daily communication. This interference arises because people often use two languages at the same time so that elements of the Kaili language enter the Indonesian language. The research data was obtained through the process of observation, recording, and recording of community speech containing a mixture of Indonesian and Rai dialect Kaili.

The results of the study showed that the interference found included lexical, morphological, phonological, and syntactic interference. Lexical interference is characterized by the inclusion of Kaili vocabulary into Indonesian sentences, morphological interference is seen in the use of Kaili affix forms, phonological interference is seen in sound changes in the pronunciation of Indonesian words, while syntactic interference is seen in the sentence structure influenced by the pattern of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect. These forms of interference are found in people's speech in daily communication situations.

Lexical Interference

Lexical interference is the inclusion of elements of the Kaili vocabulary of the Rai dialect into the use of the Indonesian language. This interference occurs because speakers are used to using two languages in daily communication so that Kaili vocabulary is often mixed into Indonesian speech. In this study, several forms of lexical interference were found characterized by the use of Kaili words or phrases in Indonesian sentences.

Table 1. Sentence Forms of Interference

Sentence	Forms of Interference	Type	Explanation
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Ini makanan narasa sekali	Narasa	Lexical	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the Kaili language "narasa" which means "delicious". This shows the use of Kaili language elements in Indonesian.
Saya mau nokumoni dulu	Nokumoni	Lexical	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the Kaili language "nokumoni" which means "to eat". This shows that there is a mixing of the Kaili language into the Indonesian language so that the Indonesian language is influenced by the Kaili dialect of Rai.
Nakafao sekali sana orang	Nakafao	Lexical	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the Kaili language "nakafao" which means "far away". The use of the word in Indonesian sentences shows that there is a mixing of the Kaili dialect of Rai into Indonesian so that there is lexical interference

Syntactic Interference

Syntactic interference is the inclusion of the pattern or sentence arrangement of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect into the use of Indonesian. This interference occurs because speakers are used to using the Kaili language in daily communication so that the sentence structure of the Kaili language affects the composition of the Indonesian language used. As a result, the sentences spoken often do not conform to the standard structure of the Indonesian language.

Table 2. Sentence Forms of Interference

Sentence	Forms of Interference	Type	Explanation
Nakafao sekali sana orang	Sentence structure " Sekali sana orang "	Syntax	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the sentence arrangement "once there people" which is influenced by the pattern of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect. The phrase "nakafao" which means "far" is used in the arrangement of Indonesian sentences that do not conform to the standard structure of Indonesian so that syntactic interference occurs.
Lenjena nagaya sekali ia	Sentence structure " Sekali ia "	Syntax	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the sentence arrangement "once he" which is influenced by the pattern of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect. The phrase "ljenjena nagaya" which means "his face is handsome" also shows the use of Kaili elements in Indonesian sentences. The arrangement is not in accordance with the standard Indonesian structure, resulting in syntactic interference.

Morphological Interference

Morphological interference is the inclusion of elements of the formation of the word Kaili language dialect Rai into the use of Indonesian. This interference occurs when the speaker uses word forms that contain affixes or morphological structures of the Kaili language in Indonesian speech. This influence arises because people are used to using the Kaili language in daily communication so that the morphological form of the Kaili language is carried away when using the Indonesian language.

Table 3. Sentence Forms of Interference

Sentence	Forms of Interference	Type	Explanation
Jangan nolumako disini	Nolumako (no+lumako)	Morphology	The form of interference is found in the Kaili word "nolumako" which is formed from the affix "no-" and the root word "lumako Pada sentence" which means "to walk". This form shows the use of the Kaili dialect Rai morphological system in Indonesian sentences so that morphological interference occurs.
Naturu mo ia sana	Naturu (na+turu)	Morphology	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the Kaili word "naturu" which is formed from the affix "na-" and the root word "turu" which means "sleep". The use of the morphological form of the Kaili language in Indonesian sentences indicates the existence of morphological interference
Sudah nokumoni kamu itu	Nokumoni (no+kumoni)	Morphology	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the Kaili word "nokumoni" which is formed from the affix "no-" and the root word "kumoni" which means "to eat". The use of the morphological form of the Kaili language in Indonesian sentences shows the existence of morphological interference.
Jangan mangova ri dala	Mangova (ma+ngova)	Morphology	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the Kaili word "mangova" which is formed from the affix "ma-" and the root word "ngova" which means "to run". The use of the morphological form of the Kaili language in Indonesian sentences shows the existence of morphological interference. In addition, the phrase "ri dala" which means "on the road" shows the use of Kaili elements in Indonesian speech.

Phonological Interference

Phonological interference is the influence of the sound of the Rai dialect Kaili on the pronunciation of Indonesian. This interference occurs because speakers are used to using the pronunciation of Kaili in daily communication, thus affecting the way words are pronounced in Indonesian. As a result, there is a change in the sound of several Indonesian words spoken by the Kaili dialect speaking Rai.

Table 4. Sentence Forms of Interference

Sentence	Forms of Interference	Type	Explanation
Tidak pigi karaja komiu?	Perubahan bunyi "Pergi" menjadi "Pigi" dan "Kerja" menjadi "Karaja"	Phonology	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the change of the sound of the word "go" to "pigi" and the word "work" to "karaja". The change in sound shows the influence of the pronunciation of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect on the pronunciation of Indonesian so that phonological interference occurs.

Kabel nikeni saban ante taz basar	Perubahan bunyi "tas besar" menjadi "taz basar"	Phonolog y	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the change of the sound of the word "big bag" to "taz basar". The change of the sound /s/ to /z/ and the change of the vowel /e/ to /a/ indicate the influence of the pronunciation of the Kaili dialect of Rai on the pronunciation of Indonesian so that phonological interference occurs.
Kabal togurana njau	Perubahan bunyi "kebal" menjadi "kabal"	Phonolog y	In this sentence, the form of interference is found in the change of the sound of the word "invulnerable" to "kabal". The change of the vowel /e/ to /a/ indicates the influence of the pronunciation of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect so that phonological interference occurs.

The presence of morphological interference suggests that the Kaili Rai language remains cognitively dominant in the linguistic repertoire of many speakers. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Nurdiana and Pramesti (2024), who found that bilingual speakers often transfer affixation patterns from their first language into the second language. However, the current study reveals a stronger degree of morphological integration than reported in previous studies. While earlier research primarily documented lexical borrowing, the Kaili Rai data indicate that grammatical structures themselves are being maintained and transferred. This difference may be attributed to the sociolinguistic context of the community, where the regional language continues to function as the primary language of interpersonal communication. Therefore, the findings imply that language interference should not be viewed solely as linguistic error but also as evidence of the resilience of local grammatical systems within multilingual settings.

Another important finding is the existence of syntactic interference, reflected in sentence constructions influenced by Kaili Rai grammatical patterns. Expressions such as *nakafao sekali sana orang* and *lenjena nagaya sekali ia* exhibit sentence structures that differ from standard Indonesian syntax. This phenomenon can be explained through transfer theory, which suggests that speakers tend to rely on familiar syntactic patterns when producing utterances in another language (Odlin, 2022). Since syntactic structures are deeply embedded in linguistic competence, they are often transferred unconsciously during bilingual communication.

The occurrence of syntactic interference supports previous findings reported by Hidayat and Kurniawati (2021), who identified sentence structure transfer as a common feature of bilingual speech. Nevertheless, the present study contributes new insights by showing that syntactic interference occurs alongside lexical and morphological interference, creating multilayered linguistic influence. This indicates that language contact in the Kaili Rai community affects not only surface-level linguistic elements but also deeper grammatical organization. From a theoretical perspective, this finding reinforces the sociocognitive view that language systems in bilingual speakers are interconnected rather than completely separate (Grosjean, 2023). Consequently, bilingual speakers often draw simultaneously from both linguistic systems when constructing utterances.

The fourth finding concerns phonological interference, which appeared through pronunciation changes such as *pergi* becoming *pigi*, *kerja* becoming *karaja*, and *tas besar* becoming *taz basar*. Phonological interference occurs because speakers apply sound patterns from their first language when pronouncing words from another language. According to contemporary phonological transfer theory, bilingual speakers frequently adapt unfamiliar sounds to fit the phonological inventory of their dominant language (Flege & Bohn, 2024). In the case of Kaili Rai speakers, habitual pronunciation patterns influence the articulation of Indonesian words, resulting in systematic sound modifications.

This finding corresponds with the research of Wahyuni et al. (2021), who reported that phonological interference is particularly common in communities where regional languages are used more frequently than Indonesian in everyday interactions. However, the present study reveals more extensive phonological adaptation, indicating a stronger influence of the local phonological system. One possible explanation is that oral communication remains the dominant mode of interaction within the community, allowing local pronunciation habits to persist despite exposure to standard Indonesian through education and media. This finding has important implications for language maintenance research because it demonstrates that phonological features are often among the most resistant linguistic elements to language shift.

From a broader sociolinguistic perspective, the coexistence of lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological interference reflects the intensity of bilingual language contact within the Kaili Rai-speaking community. The findings support the theory of bilingual competence proposed by Grosjean (2023), which argues that bilingual speakers do not operate as two separate monolinguals but rather as users of an integrated linguistic system. As a result, linguistic elements from both languages interact continuously during communication. The persistence of interference therefore should not be interpreted solely as linguistic deficiency but as a natural consequence of bilingual language processing.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that language interference is closely associated with sociocultural factors. The continued use of Kaili Rai in family and community settings strengthens speakers' attachment to local linguistic norms, while the widespread use of Indonesian in education, administration, and digital communication introduces competing linguistic structures. This dual linguistic environment creates conditions conducive to interference. Similar observations have been reported in recent studies on minority language communities worldwide, where language contact simultaneously promotes bilingual competence and linguistic convergence (De Houwer, 2023; Ortega, 2024).

Scientifically, this study contributes to the growing body of sociolinguistic research by providing empirical evidence from an under-researched regional language context. Unlike many previous studies that focused primarily on lexical borrowing, this research demonstrates that interference operates across multiple linguistic levels simultaneously. The findings therefore enrich theoretical discussions concerning language contact, bilingualism, and regional language maintenance. Moreover, the results highlight the importance of preserving local languages not only as cultural artifacts but also as active linguistic systems capable of influencing national language use. Consequently, future research should investigate how factors such as age, education, digital media exposure, and language attitudes shape the extent and nature of interference among bilingual speakers in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the interference of Indonesian language in the Rai dialect Kaili, it was found that there is an influence of the Kaili language on the use of Indonesian in daily community communication. This interference occurs because the speaking community uses two languages at the same time so that elements of the Kaili language are included in the Indonesian language. The results of the study show that the forms of interference found include lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological interference. Lexical interference is characterized by the inclusion of Kaili vocabulary such as "nakafao", "nolumako", and "ri dala" into Indonesian sentences. Morphological interference can be seen in the use of Kaili affix forms such as "no-", "na-", and "ma-" in Indonesian speech. Syntactic interference is found in sentence structure influenced by the pattern of the Kaili language of the Rai dialect, while phonological interference is seen in the change in the sound of Indonesian words such as "tas besar" to "tas basar", "rakaman" to "rapaman", and "kebal" to "kabal". Thus, the use of Indonesian by the Kaili language speaking community of the Rai dialect is still influenced by the elements of the Kaili language both in terms of vocabulary, word formation, sentence structure, and sound pronunciation. This shows that there is a strong relationship between the use of Indonesian and the Kaili language of the Rai dialect in people's daily communication.

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