Cebuano-Visayan Interference and Word Articulation of English Phonology Learners

Marcelina S. Deiparine[1]

[1] Cebu Technological University – Argao Campus, Philippines

Correspondence: Marcelina S. Deiparine, Cebu Technological University – Argao Campus, Philippines. Contact: 09326342540. E-mail: mercysarte32@gmail.com

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Abstract

Languages inherently vary in features, and individuals aspiring to learn a language beyond their mother tongue may experience linguistic interference. This study examines interference-related errors among foreign language learners of English in the Philippines. Thirty-seven purposively selected foreign language learners of English participated in this study by reading a set of English words categorized according to sound components. Data were analyzed using Corder's Error analysis model. Most interference-related errors occur with vowel phonemes, as Cebuano-Visayan has only three vowel nuclei: /a/, /i/, /u/, while General American English has significantly more. Moreover, consonant interference-related errors are mostly caused by aspiration and phonemic non-existence. Also, misarticulation of consonant phonemes does not affect semantics, but it impacts clarity and overall fluency in communication. The study concludes that educators must understand phonological interference to design teaching strategies that help learners overcome language learning complexities caused by first-language habits.

Keywords: Cebuano-Visayan, English language, phonemic interference, error analysis, foreign learners, Philippines

1. Introduction

English courses are integral to university education worldwide. In academic contexts, educators take various measures to enhance English language proficiency. This trend reflects the global status of English as a common language, driven by the desire for broader opportunities. English now accompanies goods, capital, knowledge, and cultural exchange across borders.

However, non-native speakers of the English language often encounter learning gaps due to the differences between their first language and the target language, English. According to Derakshan and Karimi (2015), the first language influences second language learning. Similarities aid learning, but differences can lead to interference-related errors. Interference refers to the phenomenon where features of one's first language influence the use of another language, which may hinder the accurate production and interpretation of meaning.

In the context of phonology, interference directly impacts the correctness of articulation. The foundational concept within phonology is the phoneme—the smallest sound unit that distinguishes meaning between words. The discovery of phonemes marked the birth of phonology as a field. Benjamin Lee Whorf, building on the work of Edward Sapir, argued that speakers possess mental representations of these sounds, which cannot be entirely identical to their physical realizations (Wiese, 2006).

Investigating interference-related errors is crucial to understanding how L1 influences L2 articulation for educators to design practical learning enhancements and assessments and for learners to navigate suitable language learning strategies. While previous studies have explored interference-related errors in various languages and domains, there is a gap concerning the specific impact of the Cebuano-Visayan phonemes on word articulation among English phonology students. This study investigates explicitly how Cebuano-Visayan phonemic features impact the articulation of English words by phonology students. The framework for this study draws from Error Analysis (EA), which examines learners' articulation errors to identify patterns.

2. Related Literature

2.1 Phoneme Inventories of Cebuano Visayan

Cebuano-Visayan is one of the key languages in the Philippines. It has its own sounds that are quite different from those in English. This language mainly has 16 consonants and 3 vowel nuclei. Pesirla (2003) examined the function of the vowels in the Cebuano-Visayan language and found that it has three vowels: "), /a/ (the central vowel for "father") /i/ (the front vowel for "see, and /u/ (the rear vowel for "food"). However, Rubino (2000) recognized a five-vowel system: /a/, /ɛ/, /i/, /o/, and /u/. This inventory is also agreeable as it can be observed in the modern Cebuano-Visayan usage, especially in borrowed words. For example, in borrowed terms like *kodigo* (/ˈkɔ.di.go/), *kompyuter* (/komˈpju.tɛɾ/), *edyukasyon* (/ɛ.d͡ʒu.kas.ˈjon/), and *eskwela* (/ɛsˈkwɛ.la/), the presence of /ɛ/ and /o/ cannot be reduced to mere variants of /i/ and /u/. These distinctions are increasingly phonemic for many speakers, particularly in urban settings or among younger generations, and must be considered when analyzing potential interference with English vowel articulation.

Pesirla's (2003) three-vowel analysis of Cebuano-Visayan—consisting of /i/, /a/, and /u/—is consistent with the earlier orthographic and phonological conventions promoted by LUDABI (Lubas sa Dagang Bisaya), a group dedicated to preserving traditional Cebuano language usage. In its formal publications and literary works, LUDABI often adhered to a simplified vowel system, reflecting the core phonemic contrasts present in native Cebuano vocabulary, before the increased influence of Spanish and English loanwords introduced more varied vowel sounds.

For consonants, unlike English, Cebuano-Visayan does not have many sounds. For instance, it does not have the sounds /θ/ (as in think) and /ð/ (as in this). It also lacks the voiced /v/ and the sounds /ʤ/ and /ʧ/ that are found in English. Since these sounds are not in their way of speaking, Cebuano-Visayan folks often swap them with the sounds they know best. For instance, when they say words in English, they might use /t/ or /s/ for /θ/. For /ð/, they use /d/ or /s/. Likewise, they often replace /v/ with /b/, and /f/ with /p/. These swaps can lead to common mistakes, mainly when saying English words.

Knowing the sounds of Cebuano-Visayan helps to see the usual patterns when speaking English as a second language. It can help educators spot regular mistakes in how learners pronounce words and create plans to help them fix these issues.

Table 1. Comparative Table of Segmental Phonemes: Cebuano-Visayan vs. General American English

Phoneme Class	Cebuano-Visayan (CV)	General American English (GAE)	Notes
Monophthongs	/a/, /i/, /u/-LUDABI /ɛ/ and /o/ - loanwords	/i/, /ɪ/, /eɪ/, /ɛ/, /æ/, /ə/, /ʌ/, /ɑ/, /ɔ/, /oʊ/, /ʊ/, /u/	CV has only 3 nucleus vowels vs. GAE's 12. CV only employs the phonemes /ɛ/ and /o/ in loanwords.
Diphthongs	/aw/, /ay/, /uy/, /iw/, /oy/	/aɪ/, /aʊ/, /ɔɪ/, /eɪ/, /oʊ/	Similar feature
Stops	/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /ʔ/	/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/ [pʰ], [tʰ], [kʰ]	GAE voiceless stops are aspirated; CV lacks aspiration.
Nasals	/m/, /n/, /ŋ/	/m/, /n/, /ŋ/	Similar feature
Fricatives	/s/, /h/ (no /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/)	/f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/	CV lacks many fricatives → /p/ used for /f/, /b/ for /v/, /s/ for /ʃ/ or /z/.
Affricates		/ʧ/, /ʤ/	CV has no phonemic affricates.
Liquids	/l/, /r/	/l/, /r/	CV and GAE both have /l/ and /r/ phonemes, but they differ significantly in **allophonic variation and articulation.** In CV, /r/ is typically realized as a **trill [r] or tap [ɾ]**. In contrast, GAE /r/ appears in several forms: most commonly as a **retroflex approximant [ɹ],** but also as a **bunched [ɻ]** and as **r-colored vowels** like [ɚ] and [ɝ] in syllabic positions. For /l/, CV uses a consistent **clear [l],** while GAE exhibits both **light [l]** in syllable-initial positions and **dark [ɫ]** in syllable-final positions.
Glides	/w/, /j/	/w/, /j/	Similar features
Glottal stop	/ʔ/ (phonemic)		The glottal stop is not phonemic in GAE.

2.2 Language Interference

Language interference-related errors, also referred to as language transfer, occur when features of a learner's native language (L1) influence their use or understanding of a target language (L2). Essentially, the influence of L1 on L2 acquisition is a widely recognized phenomenon. Derakshan and Karimi (2015) opine that the extent of this interference depends on the similarities and differences between the two languages. When second language learners attempt to write or speak in the target language, they often rely on structures from their native language. If these structures diverge significantly from those in the target language, errors may arise due to this interference.

In language learning, we encounter two types of interference: positive and negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when knowledge or skills from a learner's native language (L1) facilitate their acquisition of a second language (L2). For instance, shared cognates or similar sentence structures can aid vocabulary and grammar learning. On the other hand, negative transfer happens when L1 knowledge interferes with correct L2 usage, such as mispronunciations due to differences in phonemes. A learner has difficulties in a second language, such as phonology, vocabulary, and grammar, due to the negative transfer of habits from L1 and L2 (Beardsmore, 1982; Derakshan & Karimi, 2015).

2.3 Phonological Interference' Impact on Articulation

Ambalegin's (2019) study examined the mispronunciation of English vowels and consonants among Putera Batam University EFL learners by modifying the Received Pronunciation standard. The observational approach combined with a participatory technique was used in this descriptive qualitative study for data collection, and the articulatory identity method was employed for data analysis. Ambalegin concluded that mother tongue influence resulting from the variations in the English and Indonesian sound systems is one of the causes of mispronunciation phenomena.

Furthermore, Nsairun (2023) contributed to academic research on language acquisition by investigating how particular students at Nigeria's Federal University Lokoja articulated English fricatives. The study showed that the participants' mother tongue had a significant influence since they had trouble pronouncing certain fricatives correctly in some situations. The study also discovered that there is an overlap that is specific to the various speakers that represent each ethnic group. We could also deduce from this that speakers of different

ethnic groups are unable to generate fricative sounds correctly because they speak different languages; hence, the production of the L2 is affected by the L1's lack of fricatives.

Niu et.al (2023) also looked at the difficulties and advancements Chinese L2 English learners face while pronouncing English sounds with non-exact Chinese counterparts. Students with higher proficiency tended to pronounce words more accurately. From the data analysis, it was found that the accuracy of the participants' pronunciation of the target English sounds varied. Their incorrect mouth opening, tongue position, and diphthongization were blamed for their mispronounced vowels. They mainly mispronounced consonants due to poor manners, a lack of voicing, and incorrect places of articulation.

This literature review dives into how learners' native languages impact their English acquisition. Despite extensive research on language interference, geographic variations introduce nuances. Thus, this study aims to unravel location-specific findings

3. Method

3.1 Design

This study utilized a qualitative error analysis framework to identify and classify articulation errors caused by phonemic interference from Cebuano-Visayan. Error Analysis involves examining the linguistic errors made by learners and comparing them to the correct forms in the target language (Corder, 1974, cited in Deiparine et.al, 2024). This approach is particularly useful in second language acquisition as it reveals how learners' native language influences their production of the second language (Khansir, 2012).

3.2 Environment

The research took place at a State University located in Cebu, Philippines. This institution is widely recognized for its dedication to becoming a premier academic establishment focused on excellence and advancement across multiple disciplines. The university's vision centers on developing globally competitive individuals and enhancing essential 21st-century skills among students, including effective communication, writing proficiency, and the ability to articulate ideas within academic contexts. In alignment with this vision, the curriculum is thoughtfully structured to reflect and support the university's mission, goals, and objectives.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed in this study, which is a non-probability sampling method that involves the deliberate selection of individuals based on characteristics that align with the research goals (Patton, 2015). The researcher identified participants who were most likely to provide relevant insights into the phonological aspects of second language learning. Explicit criteria were established to ensure participants had relevant backgrounds, including: 1) bona fide college students currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies program, 2) actively taking a course in Phonology, 3) consent and availability, and 4) ethical considerations. Individuals who did not meet these qualifications were excluded from the study. This careful selection ensured that participants possessed the necessary background knowledge and engagement with the subject matter, which added depth and relevance to the data collected. Their direct involvement in phonology also meant that the findings could potentially inform and improve their academic experiences, especially if pedagogical interventions were made based on the results. This sampling strategy provided a focused and contextually appropriate participant group whose experiences were aligned with the objectives of the research.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure a systematic and reliable approach to data collection, the researcher prepared transmittal letters, secured ethical clearance, and obtained permission from appropriate authorities before conducting the study. All participants from the selected group were formally invited and oriented about the study's objectives and procedures.

Participants were then asked to read aloud from a predetermined list of English words designed to elicit specific phonemes commonly influenced by Cebuano-Visayan interference. The reading activity took place in a controlled environment to minimize external distractions. During this phase, the researcher carefully observed each participant's articulation, focusing on pronunciation patterns and deviations from standard English phonology.

Two trained research assistants were present to serve as co-observers to strengthen the reliability of the data. This triangulated observation approach aimed to reduce observer bias and enhance the consistency of the findings. Furthermore, all reading sessions were recorded using a high-quality audio device to ensure accurate capture of the participants' utterances. These recordings were later transcribed and analyzed using Corder's Error Analysis model, allowing for detailed categorization and interpretation of articulation errors. A brief debriefing was conducted after the reading sessions to address participant concerns and clarify the research's subsequent phases.

3.5 Instrument

The instrument of this study is a list of the 100 most frequently occurring words in English communication, based on an analysis of the Oxford English Corpus—a collection of texts in the English language comprising over 2 billion words. The choice of words focuses on familiarity and usability among the respondents. If they are familiar with the words, they can read them at a glance without much thought, resulting in more realistic articulation.

3.6 Data Analysis

This study referred to Corder's (1974) Error Analysis Model, which posits that examining errors can reveal what he termed a "built-in

syllabus," indicating a natural order in which a learner acquires a second language (L2). It provides insight into the learner's language development and can offer hints regarding the learning process.

Error analysis is not merely concerned with the identification of mistakes. Still, it is instrumental in understanding the learner's interlanguage - a dynamic, evolving linguistic system that reflects a learner's current level of L2 proficiency Gass et.al, 2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course* (3rd ed.). Routledge. Lightbown et.al (2021) emphasize that errors are not signs of failure but rather indicators of active language processing and hypothesis testing by learners.

As Brown (2000) notes, studying errors allows educators to identify areas where instruction can be modified to support better learner progress.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Interference-related Errors Committed by the Participants and the Phonemic Features of the Prominent Dialect in the Philippines - Cebuano-Visayan, Which Are Responsible for the Errors, Are Presented as Follows:

Table 2. Front-Vowel Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/i/	Beat	/bit/	*none*
/I/	Sit	/sIt/	/sit/
/ɛ/	Bear	/bɛr/	*none*
/e/	Save	/sev/	*none*
/æ/	Cat	/kæt/	/kat/

In analyzing front vowel interferences, the findings show that the Cebuano-Visayan (CV) vowel phoneme /iy/ does not interfere with General American English (GAE) speech among the participants. This lack of negative transfer is because /iy/ is also the only front vowel in CV, as exemplified in words like "ambi" (give it to me) and "lig-on" (durable).

However, the vowel phoneme /I/, absent in CV, experiences interference. Participants mistakenly pronounce /I/ as /iy/. The CV phoneme /iy/ occasionally interferes with GAE vowel phonemes /ey/ and /ɛ/. This interference arises because /I/, /ey/, and /ɛ/ share similar front mouth positions without constriction, raised tongues toward the hard palate, and unrounded production, similar to /iy/.

While rare, instances occur where /ɛ/ is mispronounced as /iy/, participants swiftly correct this error. The phoneme /ɛ/ is also non-existent in LUDABI (Lubas sa Dagang Bisaya). While most pronunciation difficulties observed in this study were interference-related, some errors arose from orthographic influences rather than L1 phonological transfer. For example, learners pronounced *"care"* and *"bare"* as /keɪr/ and /beɪr/, likely due to overgeneralized interpretations of English spelling patterns. This highlights the need to address spelling-pronunciation mismatches in English instruction alongside phonological interference.

Additionally, the Cebuano-Visayan (CV) vowel phoneme /a/ causes interference with the General American English (GAE) phoneme /æ/. In CV, the letter a is consistently pronounced as /a/, and never as /æ/, leading to negative transfer.

The findings emphasize the presence of language interference stemming from distinct phonological differences between Cebuano-Visayan and General American English (Pooria and Heydari, 2019). This interference is influenced by linguistic variation, which refers to regional, social, or contextual differences in how a particular language is used.

Parker and Riley (2005) claim that a person's language use varies based on their community and situation. This suggests that, depending on the situation, a person may speak differently. Because Cebuano has fewer vowels than English, Cebuanos learning English could find it difficult to pronounce some English words, particularly those with vowels that Cebuano does not have.

Table 3. Center-Vowel Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/ɑ/	Standard	/stændərd/	/stɑndard/
/ə/	Lesson	/lɛsən/	/lɛsʊn/

Based on the Center-Vowel Interferences table, the vowel phoneme /a/ remains stable due to its similarity to the only central vowel found in CV words, as seen in examples like *baba* ("mouth") and *asawa* ("wife"). In contrast, the General American English schwa /ə/ clashes significantly with CV's /a/ phoneme. Unlike the articulated vowels in CV, the schwa in GAE is brief and unstressed. These findings suggest that a wider phonological gap between a speaker's native language (Cebuano-Visayan) and the target language (General American English) increases the likelihood of negative transfer. This is particularly evident when the native language lacks equivalent vowel sounds or differs in stress and articulation patterns - a phenomenon also extensively discussed by Kakkerla (2024) in studies of cross-linguistic phonological interference.

Table 4. Back-Vowel Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/ɔ/	Saw	/sɔ/	/so/
/ow/	No	/now/	/nʊw/
/ʊ/	Should	/ʃʊd/	*none*
/u/	Too	/tu/	*none*

In the examination of back-vowel interferences, interesting patterns were found. First, the vowel phoneme /ɔ/ remains unaffected mainly by features of Cebuano Visayan (CV) vowel phonemes. This is because /ɔ/ is a distinct and relaxed General American English (GAE) phoneme. The vowel phoneme /ow/ experiences occasional interference, though less frequently than /ʊ/. The Cebuano-Visayan (CV) vowel phoneme /u/ occasionally influences the articulation of /ow/, particularly due to the absence of /ow/ in traditional CV phonology, such as that promoted by LUDABI, which recognizes only the core vowels /i/, /a/, and /u/. However, this interference is not always phonological. In many cases, it appears to be orthographic, as seen in words like *took*, *hood*, and *book*, where the double "o" misleads learners into producing a prolonged /uw/ sound. This is parallel to how learners articulate /iy/ in words with double "e" spellings, such as *steel* and *meet*. Such errors highlight the combined influence of spelling conventions and L1 vowel habits on L2 English pronunciation. Lastly, the vowel phoneme /uw/ remains relatively unaffected. It is the sole back-vowel phoneme in CV, as seen in words like 'adtu' (to go) and 'hisgut' (tackle).

These results imply that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Cebu may face greater challenges when learning a language other than their mother tongue. Learning a second language like English may be challenging due to the unique characteristics of the Cebuano-Visayan (CV) language, such as its limited vowel sounds. This bolsters the argument made by Baker and Hengeveld (2012) that learning a second language later in life can be extremely difficult. Most students struggle to achieve fluency levels on par with native speakers, even after years of study and practice.

Table 5. Diphthong Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/ɑʊ/	Now	/nɑʊ/	*None*
/ɑɪ/	Try	/trɑɪ/	*none*
/ɔɪ/	Boy	/bɔɪ/	/buI/

Diphthong phonemes /ɑʊ/ and /ɑɪ/ are not significantly affected. These diphthongs are prevalent in Cebuano Visayan (CV), as seen in words like 'kisaw' (motion) and 'likay' (avoid). However, the /oy/ diphthong often experiences interference from the CV phoneme /uy/, as seen in words like 'kapuy' (tiresome) and 'tulud' (push). These findings suggest that the established phonemic features of CV influence the production of General American English (GAE) phonemes.

This supports the concept of interference of Foronda (2017), which explains how a learner's first language (L1) can influence their use of a second language (L2), often resulting in errors. These errors occur when the first language's rules, sounds, or sentence structures are inadvertently transferred to the second language. This suggests that certain Cebuano traits, such as its grammar or sound system, may make it more difficult for EFL students in Cebu to learn English. This can result in grammatical mistakes, poorly constructed sentences, or pronunciation issues because the learners rely on patterns from their native language.

Table 6. Stops Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/p/	Purse	/pʰɜrs/	/purs/
/t/	Talk	/tʰɔk/	/tʊk/
/k/	Kite	/kʰaɪt/	/kaɪt/

Stop interference is commonly related to aspiration. In General American English (GAE), specific phonemes have multiple variants, such as the aspirated /pʰ/ in 'pie' and the unaspirated 'p' in 'spin.' These variants, known as allophones, are specific to GAE. However, in Cebuano Visayan (CV), no such variations for the same phonemes lead to stop interference. In addition, participants employ a relaxed voicing for CV stops instead of making it tenser. These results indicate that Foreign Language (EFL) learners of English in Cebu who aim for near-native proficiency may encounter challenges in mastering GAE phonological norms, particularly due to the lack of aspiration distinctions in their native language. This finding reinforces Foronda's (2017) assertion that significant differences between native language structures and target language rules can hinder the acquisition and internalization of second-language phonological patterns.

Table 7. Fricatives Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/f/	Far	/fɑr/	/pʌr/
/v/	Very	/vɛrɪ/	/berɪ/
/θ/	Thought	/thɔt/	/toʊt/
/ð/	Those	/ðoʊs/	/doʊs/
/s/	Sir	/sɜr/	*none*
/z/	Zoo	/zuw/	/suw/
/ʃ/	Sharp	/ʃɑrp/	*None*
/ʒ/	Treasure	/trɛʒər/	/trɛʃər/
/h/	High	/hɑɪ/	*None*

In the context of Fricative Interferences, specific phonemes—specifically /f/ and /v/—that are not commonly used in the Cebuano-Visayan (CV) dialect occasionally get influenced by the /p/ and /b/ phonemes in CV. Interestingly, these affected phonemes are often produced with less force, resembling a somewhat incomplete /f/ or /v/. Instead of emphasizing the frictional quality, participants tend to release air lifelessly through a narrow opening formed by the lower lip and upper teeth.

Additionally, the phonemes /th/ and /đh/, which are absent in CV, tend to be interfered with by the /t/ and /d/ phonemes in CV. This interference arises partly because the placement of /th/ and /đh/—between the upper and lower teeth is often replaced by an alveolar ridge position close to the teeth, producing/t/ and /d/ sounds.

The phoneme /s/ remains relatively unaffected, as it shares features with the CV phoneme /s/. However, the absence of the /z/ phoneme in CV leads to interference when participants encounter words containing /z/.

Regarding specific words like “these” and “was,” interference occurs due to spelling differences. In CV, words are pronounced as spelled. Similarly, the phonemes /sh/ and /zh/ exhibit a pattern: the former (a CV cluster) is not interfered with, while the latter is often influenced by the former due to the absence of a /zh/ phoneme in CV.

Lastly, the phoneme /h/ experiences minimal interference in terms of aspiration. Participants tend to release air lifelessly through a wide glottal opening instead of emphasizing its frictional quality. These results imply that participants frequently use CV structures when they want to speak General American English (GAE). This is consistent with the notion that different structures can result in mistakes, such as first language interference in second language acquisition.

Table 8. Cluster Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
b-r	Bread	/bʰrɛd/	/brid/
p-r	Pressure	/pʰrɛʃər/	/prɛʃər/
g-l	Glimpse	/gʰlɪmps/	/glɪmps/
k-r	Crisp	/kʰrɪsp/	/krɪsp/
s-t-r	Strength	/strʰɛŋθ/	/strɛŋθ/

In the context of cluster interferences, aspiration plays a significant role. Specifically, General American English (GAE) may have multiple variants of the same phoneme. For instance, consider the aspirated /bʰ/ in the word “bread” versus the unaspirated /b/ in “sob.” These variants, known as allophones, are unique to GAE.

However, Cebuano-Visayan (CV) has no variations for the same phoneme. This lack of allophones in CV is a key factor contributing to cluster interferences. When transitioning from CV to GAE, the absence of these allophonic distinctions can lead to noticeable differences in pronunciation.

This outcome supports Avanika's (2009) assertion that overcoming one's native linguistic habits is essential for effective second language acquisition. Acquiring a new language, such as English, often involves carrying over familiar grammatical structures, idioms, and phonological patterns from the first language. These transfers, while subtle, can result in persistent pronunciation errors that affect the naturalness and fluency of speech. Therefore, achieving genuine fluency requires not only learning new linguistic systems but also intentionally unlearning features of the native language that conflict with those of the target language.

Table 9. Syllabic Consonants Interferences

General American English Front Vowels	General American English Lexicons	General American English Standard Articulation	Interference-Related Errors
/n/	Button	/bʌtn/	/bʌtən/
/l/	Middle	/mɪdl/	/mɪdʊl/

In the context of syllabic consonants, the phonemes /n/ and /m/ experience interference. Participants tend to retain the sound of the preceding vowel when pronouncing these consonants. Interestingly, this pronunciation pattern aligns with Cebuano-Visayan (CV) practice, where words are often spelled as they are.

The implication here is that transferring phonemic rules from CV to General American English (GAE) can be challenging, especially

when the two languages exhibit significant differences. If this challenge isn't overcome, interference occurs. This result supports Allard's (2011) claim that information decoding from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2) is facilitated by closely related languages. On the other hand, more language interference usually happens throughout the learning process when languages are less closely related.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that differences in inventory and features of the Cebuano-Visayan and General American English contributed to the articulation errors of the phonology students. Even with a few similar phonemic features between the two languages, these findings imply that English educators in Cebu, especially phonology teachers, must design teaching-learning activities that will let the language learners compartmentalize the distinct features of the native and the target language. If not addressed, interference may affect intelligibility and communicative competence, whether in academic or professional contexts. Educators should incorporate plenty of speech activities, as it is only through constant application that learners can ace English language articulation.

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