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Understanding Interlingual Error and Intralingual Errors in Indonesian EFL

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to explore and understand the types of interlingual and interlingual errors made by Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Interlingual errors occur due to the influence of the first language (L1) of learners, while intralingual errors occur due to incomplete or inaccurate understanding of the target language rules. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study analyzes the written and spoken English productions of learners to identify common error patterns. The findings reveal that interlingual errors often occur in sentence structure, word order and direct translation from Indonesian to English. In the meantime, intralingual errors frequently occur in the abuse of verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and the overgeneralization of grammatical rules. These errors indicate that learners are actively constructing their interlingual system, but are still having difficulties mastering English grammar. Understanding these types of errors is essential for teachers to develop more effective teaching strategies and provide appropriate correction feedback. The study concludes that interlingual and intralingual errors play an important role in the process of acquiring a second language and should be seen as a natural part of learning rather than just failures.

Keywords: *interlingual errors, intralingual errors, EFL learners, error analysis, second language acquisition*

INTRODUCTION

English's role as a crucial international language in fields like education, techrole as a crucial international language in fields like education, technology, and global interactions is undeniable. In numerous countries where English is not the native tongue, Indonesia included, Englis language instruction is introduced as a foreign language within the standard educational framework right from the beginning. Although Indonesian students are exposed to English for a considerable number of years, many continue to struggle when it comes to fully grasping the language, specifically its grammar, sentence

contriction, and the suitable application of language ruels. Frequently, these challanges manifest as different kinds of errors in both verbal and written forms of communication.

Errors are an unavoidable aspect when someone is learning a second language. Instead of considering them defeats, these mistakes give us important information about how language skills and thingking grow in learners. According to Corder (1981), learners' errors are significant because they reveal the strategies learners use to acquire a new language. Through error analysis, teachers and researchers can better understand how learners process linguistic input and construct their interlanguage system.

Besides, intralingual errors come from learners' incomplete understanding the target language system. These errors are not caused by first language interference but by overgeneralization, simplification, or misinterpretation of grammatical rules. Richards (1974) argues that intralingual errors reflect learners' developmental stages and indicate that they are actively forming hypotheses about how the target language works. Such errors are common even among advanced learners and should be viewed as evidence of cognitive engagement in language learning.

Previous studies in second language acquisition have demonstrated that both interlingual and intralingual errors coexist throughout the learning process. However, in many EFL classrooms, errors are still often treated as failures rather than as learning opportunities. This perception may discourage learners from experimenting with language use and reduce their confidence in communication. Therefore, understanding the nature and sources of learners' errors is essential for developing effective pedagogical strategies.

In addition, within the Indonesian context, English is taught as a foreign language, the rare interaction with real English materials outside the classroom context may make students more dependent on their mother tongue and may cause specific types of errors to occur more frequently. This situation emphasizes how crucial it is for instructors to spot recurring errors and offer suitable educational help that tackles the thinking processes and language elements involved in learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Error Analysis in Second Language Acquisition

Error analysis constitutes an investigation into second language learning, primarily examining language construction capabilities learners. This approach centers on detailing and scrutinizing genuine errors made by L2 learners, differing from contrastive analysis, which relies on theoretical linguistic frameworks assigned to native speakers of both L1 and L2 languages (Troike, 2006). This implies that second language learners commonly encounter error analysis, which more inclined assess learne's capacity to form language than to analyze linguistic structure, as seen in contrastive anaysis.

The concept of error analysis was first systematically introduced by Corder (1967), revealed "learner errors are not merely signs of failure but evidence of active learning" According to Corder, errors reflect the learner's internal linguistic system,

often referred to as *interlanguage*. This perspective marked a shift from behaviorist views, which considered errors as habits to be eliminated, to a cognitive view of language learning.

Corder (1967) distinguishes among errors also mistakes. Errors are systematic as well as occur because of incomplete knowledge, whereas mistakes are performance slips that learners can self-correct. This distinction is essential in analyzing learners' language development and understanding whether an error reflects competence or momentary performance issues.

a. Interlingual Error

Interlingual error may manifest in a variety of ways, including interference, language transfer, and cross-linguistic interference. The learner makes this mistake when his or her habits (systems, patterns, or rules) get in the way of learning the second language's patterns and rules, according to Corder (1981). Interference, sometimes known as negative transfer, is defined by Lado (1964) as the detrimental effect of one's native language (L1) on one's proficiency in a second language (L2). Language transfer, which originates in the learner's native tongue, is the root cause of interlingual mistakes, according to Chelli (2013). If a person learning a foreign language makes a mistake in the target language because of his or her mother tongue, this is known as interlingual, according to Richard (1974: 173). The majority of second language learners' mistakes, according to Brown (1980: 160), stem from the misconception that the target language's forms are identical to their own. Transfer mistake is the root cause of interlingual errors, as stated by Allen and Corder (1974). According to Touchie (1986), interference from the mother language is the primary source of interlingual mistakes. Al-Khresheh (2010) is another researcher. Literal translation, he said, is the root cause of interlingual mistakes.

1. First, there's the transfer mistake, which happens when the mother language gets in the way. A learner who is unfamiliar with the rules of the target language is likely to rely on the ones he or she learned in their original tongue.
2. One's native language Interference: students make mistakes when they try to transfer their first-language models to the target language instead of discovering its structure.
3. Thirdly, literal translation: when a learner literally copies a statement or idiom from their native language into the target language, mistakes are inevitable.

b. Intralingual Error

Error might occur for reasons other than interference with the student's native language. Since students often lack a solid foundation in the target language, they may struggle to express themselves clearly while speaking it. According to Richard (1974: 6), when a student makes products that reflect their target language generalizations rather than their mother tongue's structure, this is called intralingual interference. According to Brown (1980: 162), research shows that during learning a new language, most of the transfer occurs across languages. However, as the

learner starts to grasp the basics of the new system, they start to show signs of transfer generalization inside the target language as well.

Intralingual mistakes are grouped into four types according to Richard (1974: 120): overgeneralization, insufficient rule application, ignorance of rule constraints, and incorrect concept hypothesized or semantic errors.

1. Overgeneralization: this occurs when a student builds an incorrect structure in the target language based on his prior knowledge of other structures. Adding a "s" to even irregular plurals is one way to make a plural, according to Littlewood (1984), who also generalizes the "-ed" past form.
2. Second, the learner of a second language does not adhere to the target language's structural norms; this is known as "ignorance of rule restrictions," according to James (1998: 63). The student makes this mistake when he or she disregards the constraints imposed by preexisting frameworks. The analogy-based explanation for certain rule limitation mistakes is that they are the product of rule learning in roles.
3. Learner Failing to Fully Apply the Rules: This mistake might happen when the student does not fully apply the rules in response to the stimulus language.
4. The False Concept Hypothesis: Learners' failure to accurately distinguish between elements in the target language results in the development of false concepts. Theoretically incorrect learning outcomes occur when students fail to distinguish between several elements in the target language.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design aimed at providing a detailed explanation interlingual also intralingual errors made Indonesian EFL learners. The purpose of this research is not to measure frequency or test hypotheses, but to describe, interpret, and explain language errors based on established theoretical perspectives in Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

Descriptive qualitative research appropriate as this study because allows researcher for exploring linguistic phenomena in depth and to interpret meaning rather than quantify data. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research emphasizes understanding phenomena from the participants' or data's perspective and focuses on interpretation rather than numerical analysis.

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in Error Analysis and Interlanguage Theory. The approach is theoretically informed by the works of Corder (1967).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview of Error Patterns in Indonesian EFL Learners

This discussion elaborates on types of errors commonly produced by Indonesian learners English, focusing on interlingual and intralingual errors. Based on theoretical

analysis and documented learner examples, it is evident that errors are systematic and reflect learners' developmental stages rather than random mistakes.

Errors function as indicators of how learners process linguistic input, test hypotheses, and gradually construct their interlanguage system. The findings confirm that Indonesian EFL learners experience difficulties mainly due to structural differences between Bahasa Indonesia and English, as well as incomplete mastery of English grammatical rules.

2. Interlingual Errors: Influence of the First Language

2.1 Errors in Sentence Structure (Copula Omission)

One of the most frequent interlingual errors is omission the verb *to be* in nominal sentences.

Examples:

- *She very beautiful.*
- *My brother tall.*
- *They happy today.*

From a linguistic perspective, this type of error reflects a direct transfer of syntactic patterns from Bahasa Indonesia into English. In Indonesian, adjectives can function as predicates without the need for a copular verb. For instance, sentences such as *Dia cantik* and *Mereka senang* are grammatically complete and acceptable in Indonesian. Consequently, learners assume that English follows a similar grammatical structure, resulting in the omission of *to be* in English nominal sentences.

This phenomenon can be explained through negative transfer, a key concept in Error Analysis, where structural differences among first language (L1) also target language (L2) lead for systematic errors. Since Indonesian does not grammaticalize the copular function in present tense nominal clauses, learners fail to perceive the necessity of inserting *is, are*, or *am* in English sentences.

From a cognitive perspective, this error reflects the learners' reliance on their existing linguistic knowledge when processing a new language. At early stages of acquisition, learners tending for map new linguistic input onto familiar structures from their L1. This cognitive strategy reduces processing load but often results in inaccurate output when the two languages differ structurally.

Moreover, this type of error demonstrates the interlanguage system proposed by Selinker (1972). The learner's interlanguage at this stage is neither fully Indonesian nor fully English, but a hybrid system with its own internal rules. In this system, the rule "adjectives can function as predicates without a copula" is temporarily valid until further exposure and instruction lead to restructuring.

2.2 Errors in Tense Usage

Errors in tense usage represent one of the most persistent and systematic difficulties faced by Indonesian learners of English. These errors typically appear in the form of uninflected verbs in past-time contexts, as illustrated in the following examples:

- *Yesterday I go to school.*
- *Last night I watch movie.*
- *Two days ago she come to my house.*

In these sentences, learners correctly express the temporal context through time adverbs but fail to apply the appropriate past tense inflection to the verb. This pattern indicates that the learners recognize the concept of time reference but do not fully understand or internalize how tense is grammatically encoded in English.

From a linguistic perspective, this phenomenon reflects negative transfer from the first language. Since Indonesian verbs do not change form to mark tense, learners fail to recognize the obligatory nature of tense inflection in English. Consequently, verbs remain in their base form even when the temporal context clearly indicates past time reference.

This type of error demonstrates that learners tend to prioritize semantic meaning over grammatical form. Because the temporal meaning is already conveyed through adverbs such as *yesterday* or *last night and two days ago*, learners may perceive verb inflection as redundant or unnecessary. This supports the view that learners initially focus on communicative effectiveness rather than grammatical accuracy.

2.3 Errors in Prepositions and Collocations

Prepositional usage represents as the challenging areas Indonesian EFL learners, primarily due to fundamental differences between Indonesian and English prepositional systems. Errors such as:

- *Discuss about the problem*
- *Married with him*
- *Different with mine*

When Indonesian learners translate these expressions into English, they tend to perform word-by-word translation**,** resulting in incorrect prepositional combinations such as *discuss about*, *married with*, and *different with*. In contrast, English prepositions are highly lexically governed**,** meaning that certain verbs and adjectives require specific prepositions or none at all.

For instance: *discuss* is a transitive verb and does not require a preposition (*discuss the problem*). *married* is typically followed by *to* when referring to a spouse. *different* collocates with *from* (or *to* in some varieties of English, but never *with* in standard usage).

This mismatch between the two languages leads learners to incorrectly map Indonesian structures onto English constructions.

2.4 Error in Word order

Word order errors constitute another significant type of interlingual error frequently produced by Indonesian EFL learners. These errors occur because of fundamental structural differences between Indonesian and English noun phrase constructions. Examples such as:

- *Book this is mine.*
- *Car red that is expensive.*

In Indonesian, modifiers commonly follow the noun, particularly adjectives and demonstratives. For example:

- *buku ini* (this book)
- *mobil merah itu* (that red car)

In contrast, English follows a modifier–head structure, where adjectives and demonstratives precede the noun:

- *this book*
- *that red car*

When Indonesian learners produce English sentences, they often apply the Indonesian noun phrase structure directly, resulting in reversed word order.

3. Intralingual Errors: Errors Within the Target Language System

Intralingual errors outcomes learners' incomplete or incorrect understanding English grammar rather than influence from the first language. These errors are common at intermediate levels.

3.1 Overgeneralization

is a common type of intralingual error that occurs when learners apply a grammatical rule too broadly across contexts where the rule does not apply. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the formation of past tense verbs, as shown in the following examples:

- *She goed to school.*
- *He buyed a new phone.*

These errors occur because learners have already internalized general rule past tense verbs in English are formed as adding *-ed* to base form. However, they have not yet fully mastered the system of irregular verbs.

From a linguistic standpoint, overgeneralization reflects learners' attempts to simplify the target language system by creating regular patterns. English past tense morphology is partially regular and partially irregular. While many verbs follow the regular *-ed* pattern (*walk → walked*, *play → played*), others do not (*go → went*, *buy → bought*). When learners encounter this inconsistency, they tend to apply the most frequent and productive rule—adding *-ed*—to all verbs, including irregular ones. This results in forms such as *goed* and *buyed*. This behaviour indicates that learners have successfully identified a grammatical rule but have not yet learned its exceptions.

From a developmental perspective, overgeneralization is considered a natural stage of language acquisition, rather than an error caused by L1 interference. Unlike interlingual errors, overgeneralization arises from learner's internal processing of target language system itself.

3.2 Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Is type intralingual error which happen as learners apply grammatical rule without recognizing the specific conditions or limitations under which the rule operates. In this case, learners incorrectly assume that all verbs followed by another verb must be followed by the infinitive form (*to + verb*).

Examples include:

- *He made me to cry.*
- *She let me to go.*

These constructions are ungrammatical in English, as the correct forms are:

- *He made me cry.*
- *She let me go.*

In English, verbs that take another verb as their complement do not follow a single uniform pattern. Instead, different verbs require different complement structures, such as:

- Verb + to-infinitive (e.g., *want to go, decide to leave*)
- Verb + bare infinitive (e.g., *make someone do, let someone go*)
- Verb + gerund (e.g., *enjoy reading, avoid eating*)

Learners often overgeneralize the *to-infinitive* pattern because it is the most frequent and salient structure introduced in early English instruction. As a result, they incorrectly assume that all verbs followed by another verb must use *to + verb*. This leads to errors such as *made me to cry* and *let me to go*, where learners ignore the grammatical restriction that *make* and *let* require a bare infinitive.

3.2 Incomplete application of rules

Refers to a type of intralingual error in which learners do not apply the full grammatical structure required in a sentence. Instead, they produce simplified forms that omit necessary grammatical elements. This type of error frequently appears in spoken language, where communicative efficiency is often prioritized over grammatical accuracy.

Examples include:

- *You like coffee?*
- *She going to school?*

In these examples, learners omit auxiliary verbs that are required in standard English sentence formation.

n English, both yes–no questions and progressive constructions require auxiliary verbs:

- Yes/no questions
  → *Do you like coffee?*
- →*She is going to school.*

However, learners often omit the auxiliary verbs (*do*, *does*, *is*), resulting in incomplete grammatical structures. This omission reflects an incomplete application of syntactic rules rather than a lack of understanding of meaning. The core message remains intelligible, but the grammatical form is reduced.

In Indonesian, yes–no questions do not require auxiliary verbs. Questions are often formed simply through intonation or the addition of question particles such as *apakah*:

- *Kamu suka kopi?*
- *Dia pergi ke sekolah?*

Similarly, Indonesian does not require a copular or auxiliary verb in progressive-like constructions. This structural simplicity encourages learners to transfer Indonesian sentence patterns directly into English. Thus, learners assume that English questions and progressive forms can be constructed without auxiliary verbs, leading to incomplete application of grammatical rules.

3.3 False concept hypothesized

Refers to errors that occur when learners form an incorrect understanding of a grammatical concept or rule. Unlike overgeneralization or incomplete rule application, this type of error results from misinterpretation or misunderstanding of how a grammatical structure functions in the target language.

Examples include:

- *She is agree with me.*

In this sentence, learners incorrectly treat *agree* as an adjective that requires the copular verb *be*. In standard English, *agree* is a verb, not an adjective, and therefore should not be preceded by *to be*. The correct form is:

She agrees with me.

This error suggests that learners mistakenly believe all predicates following a subject must include *be*, especially when expressing a state or opinion.

- ***I am boring with this movie.***

Here, learners confuse **-ing** and **-ed** participle adjectives. In English:

- **-ing adjectives** describe the cause of a feeling (*boring = causing boredom*),
- **-ed adjectives** describe the experiencer of the feeling (*bored = feeling bored*).

Thus, the correct sentence is:

I am bored with this movie.

The learner incorrectly assumes that the subject must be linked with the -ing form, misunderstanding the semantic distinction between cause and effect. False concept hypothesized occurs when learners build an incorrect mental representation of a grammatical concept. Instead of lacking knowledge, learners possess *misleading knowledge*.

In this case, learners may form incorrect hypotheses such as:

- "All adjectives need *to be*."
- "-ing forms describe feelings."
- "Verbs and adjectives behave the same way."

These faulty generalizations arise because learners attempt to systematize complex grammatical information with limited input.

- *I am bored with this movie.*

The learner incorrectly assumes that the subject must be linked with the -ing form, misunderstanding the semantic distinction between cause and effect.

The influence of Indonesian further contributes to this type of error. In Indonesian: Adjectives do not require a copular verb (*Saya setuju*, not *Saya adalah setuju*). Emotional states are often expressed without morphological distinction between agent and experiencer. Because Indonesian does not differentiate between *boring* and *bored* morphologically, learners may assume the English forms are interchangeable. This leads to confusion between adjective categories and incorrect mapping between form and meaning.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined various types of grammatical errors commonly produced by Indonesian learners of English, with a particular focus on interlingual and intralingual errors. Learner errors are systematic symptoms of learners' evolving interlanguage, not random blunders, as the study indicates. These mistakes show dynamic interaction between the learners' first language (Bahasa Indonesia), their evolving understanding of English grammatical rules, and their cognitive strategies in second language acquisition.

Interlingual errors, such as the omission of the verb *to be*, incorrect use of prepositions, and word order deviations, primarily stem from structural differences between Indonesian and English. Because Indonesian does not require copular verbs, tense inflections, or strict modifier–head ordering, learners often transfer these L1 structures directly into English. This negative transfer results in errors like *She very beautiful*, *discuss about the problem*, and *book this is mine*. These findings confirm that first language influence plays a significant role, particularly at the early and intermediate stages of learning.

Intralingual errors, on the other hand, arise from learners' internal processing of the target language system itself. Errors such as overgeneralization (*goed, buyed*), ignorance of rule restrictions (*made me to cry*), incomplete application of rules (*You like coffee?*), also false concept hypothesized (*I am boring*) indicate that learners are actively constructing grammatical rules based on limited input. These errors demonstrate developmental progress rather than linguistic deficiency, as learners attempt to simplify, generalize, and systematize complex grammatical structures.

Across all error types, the findings suggest that learners prioritize meaning and communicative effectiveness over grammatical accuracy, especially in spoken communication. This tendency leads to simplified structures that remain understandable but deviate from standard English grammar. Such patterns are consistent with theories of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) also error analysis (Corder, 1967), which view errors natural as well as necessary stages language development.

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