



Interlanguage Analysis on Indonesian EFL Learners' Compositions

Analisis Penggunaan Bahasa Antara dalam Tulisan Pebelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the interlanguage production by Indonesian EFL students in their English compositions. Interlanguage describes the language produced by second or foreign language learners when learning the target language. Forty college students majoring in English for tourism industry were the subjects in this study. In collecting the data, the students were asked to write a recount text with a topic "an experience of visiting a hotel" through a guided writing exercise. The framework of error analysis and interlanguage analysis were used in analyzing the data. The result shows that the students' interlanguage production is influenced by both Indonesian language as their native language (NL) and English as the target language (TL). The influences were found in both lexical and grammatical forms. This study implies that in learning a foreign language, errors are made by students and by knowing the errors, teachers and tutors can apply appropriate strategies and materials to enhance learning.

Keywords: *interlanguage, composition, first language, target language, EFL*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis penggunaan bahasa antara dalam tulisan pebelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Data diperoleh dari tulisan empat puluh mahasiswa program studi bahasa Inggris untuk pariwisata. Dalam proses pengumpulan data, mahasiswa diminta untuk menulis sebuah teks dengan topik *an experience of visiting a hotel* melalui latihan menulis terbimbing menggunakan gambar. Dalam penelitian ini, kerangka analisis kesalahan dan analisis bahasa antara digunakan untuk

menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa produksi bahasa antara mahasiswa dipengaruhi oleh bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa pertama (NL) dan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa target (TL). Kedua pengaruh tersebut ditemukan dalam bentuk leksikal dan gramatikal. Penelitian ini berimplikasi bahwa dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing, kesalahan dibuat oleh pebelajar. Dengan diketahuinya kesalahan yang dibuat oleh pebelajar, guru dapat menerapkan dan menggunakan strategi serta bahan ajar yang sesuai untuk meningkatkan proses pembelajaran.

Kata kunci: bahasa antara, tulisan, bahasa pertama, bahasa target

A. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the interlanguage produced by EFL (English as Foreign Language) college students in their compositions. This study focuses on the students' errors in the composition as well as finds out whether the errors are dominantly influenced by the students' first language (Indonesian language) or the target language (English). The term 'interlanguage' was proposed by Selinker in 1972. It refers to the student's linguistic system, which is different from the student's mother tongue or first language (L1) and target language (L2).

Since interlanguage increases in EFL teaching, making errors commonly happen both in oral and written texts. According to Manzolim and Gumpal (2015), errors occur because of the students' interference of L1 affected their English grammar constructions. Errors can help the students to be more aware of the confusion they have made, which shows that the students go through a developmental process (Kil, 2003). Therefore, errors in students' composition still exist even though the students have learned English as a foreign language since they were in the fourth grade of Elementary School. Research results confirmed that EFL students of Senior High School, Vocational High School, Freshmen, and Postgraduate still made errors in their composition. The errors are caused by the confusion when they have to change the pattern from the first language, which already stays in their brain to the pattern of the target language (Cheng, 2015; Fauziati, 2017; Tiarina, 2017; Asikin, 2017; Handayani, et al., 2019).

The emergence of errors is extremely natural in acquiring the process of learning English as a foreign language. A student's first language (Indonesian language) and target language (English) are the factors which may influence his/her interlanguage. The term interlanguage proposed by Selinker in 1972 refers to the student's linguistic system, which is different from the student's mother tongue (Indonesian language) and target language (English). It describes the type of language produced by foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a new language. It also represents the students' journey from their L1 to the acquisition of the L2. It is thought of as a third language that is unique to particular students which represent a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the L1 and L2. In other words, Sharwood-Smith (1994) defined interlanguage as the systematic linguistic behaviour of students of other languages. While for the word "language" suggests interlanguage as a separate linguistic system that has different specific characteristics, the student's L1 and L2.

The study conducted by Fauziati (2011) about learning English as a foreign language indicated that all of the students' grammatical errors could be eliminated. Furthermore, it was shown that the errors were dynamic. At a particular period of learning course, some grammatical errors appeared to be destabilized, and some were fluctuating, while others were stabilized. It means fluctuating errors tended to

destabilize, and the stabilized errors were also likely to destabilize. Fauziati confirms that learners' grammatical errors are dynamic and not fossilized. They may get maintained but just temporarily. Further, she affirms that in students' composition production, students experienced interlanguage, which is influenced by both the native language and the target language.

A study conducted by Darussalam (2013) showed that the dominant strategy in students' interlanguage was overgeneralization. It is where the students relied on their linguistic knowledge of the target language rather than their first language. In the study, the students misused some words which have a similar meaning in their sentences, for instance, 'Situation in the beach very *noisy'. The word 'noisy' was applied to replace 'crowded'. It was due to the students who are lack of vocabulary. Lestari (2016) found that the target language mostly influences learners' interlanguage. The study reveals the frequency of the mother tongue to students' interlanguage is 48%, and the target language is 52%. It implies that EFL learners should be more aware of English rules in writing English text.

Furthermore, there were studies conducted by Syahrullah (2015) and Afiana et al. (2018) focused on Junior High School students' interlanguage. The result shows that the students' interlanguage was influenced by both first language and target language in the level of morphology and syntax.

Interlanguage does not only happen in Indonesian EFL students, but also to students in other countries such as China which used English as Foreign Language. The result shows that the students' errors existed because of their developmental process, where they applied language rules between the mother tongue and target language. The students are introduced to new rules; adjustment, improvement, replacement, and expansion of the transitional rule system (Cheng, 2015).

There were three significant characteristics of interlanguage, namely: systematicity, permeability, and fossilization. Systematicity is a consistent error in rule and feature. Permeability in interlanguage exists through the infiltration of the native language and the target language system. Adjemian (1976) stated the fossilization happens when the permeability and dynamicity of interlanguage are gone.

There are some factors causing fossilization, namely: age, sex, social class, and ethnic identity (Ellis, 2008). The interlanguage features can be summarized from Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005), and Saviile-Troike (2012) as follows: (1) interlanguage has linguistic system itself; (2) in dynamic of sense, the system changes frequently; (3) interlanguage is variable in a sense that at any stage of development the learner employs different forms for the same grammatical structure; (4) interlanguage is the product of various learning strategies such as native language transfer, overgeneralization or simplification; (5) interlanguage may fossilize; and (6) interlanguage is permeable or is open to influence from students' L1 and L2 systems. The permeability was firstly noted by Brown (1994) and Connor (1996). They categorized learner's language error into interlingual and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors result from students' L1 influence, while Intralingual errors by the target language system. Thus, many students' errors are due to the influence of their first language (L1) system. Similarly, O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Katamba (2002) discussed the dual nature of interlanguage transfer. Errors which reflect the influence of the first language and developmental errors involve the type of errors as a result of overgeneralization or simplification of the target language rules.

Foreign language learners experience interlanguage almost in all levels of education, including college students. The proficiency in a variety of foreign

language is the fundamental prerequisite for successful communication, for example, in the tourism industry. Similarly, mutual benefits understanding among students involved in several universities' exchange programs. Intercultural contacts contribute to the development of intercultural communication. It is necessary to increase awareness of the importance of foreign language skills and foster language development in the tourism and hospitality industry (Sindik & Bozinovic, 2013). Adnyani (2011) agreed that one of the crucial aspects which determine the success of cross-cultural communication is being conscious of the background of the cultural differences. One of the essential skills in the tourism industry is the ability to write English text. Therefore, the erroneous in students' composition should be avoided.

As stated previously, this study investigates the interlanguage in students' composition. Written communication is one of the tools as a product which connects people to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings. In all educational levels; Elementary School, Junior High School, Senior High School, college, and university, it is important to look at writing not only as a product but as a social act which culturally shaped and individually and socially purposed (Weigle, 2002).

Most of the previous studies reviewed in this study have investigated erroneous in students' composition of EFL learners in Indonesia in the level of Junior High School, Senior High School, Freshmen, and Postgraduate. Meanwhile, none of these studies used Indonesian EFL learners majoring in the tourism industry as the subjects being observed. These students are learning English as a preparation for them to work in tourism fields that may involve spoken and written English. However, in most case, these students rely more on their speaking skills because this is the skill that shows mastery most prominently in the tour and guiding, front office, marketing, as well as food and beverage service; hence they tend to neglect their writing skills. It may lead to a lack of motivation to practice their writing skills that may affect their control of the interlanguage interference when they have to produce written text in English. Thus, it is essential to focus the present study on the students' interlanguage in their English compositions. Therefore, this study is worth conducting.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a qualitative study, where the data were analyzed descriptively. Qualitative research design investigated the quality of relationships, activities, situations, and also materials. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the context and attempts to explain the intentional behaviours (Ary et al., 2010). The subjects of this study were forty EFL college students at a state university in Bali. They were majoring in English for the tourism industry. They studied English as a fundamental skill that should be mastered, including writing. Therefore, the object of this study was the interlanguage in students' composition based on the given topic.

In collecting the data, the EFL learners were asked to write a recount text through guided writing with the theme 'An experience of visiting hotel'. The underlying reason for using guided writing was as the step by step instructions in writing given to the EFL learners. It helped the EFL learners to write the text by providing them with some forms of assistance and made sure that they were doing the right thing (Tyner, 2004; Dunigan, 2008; Anggara, 2013).

In identifying the data, the framework of error analysis and interlanguage analysis was used. Error analysis was used to analyze the forms and causes of language errors. Corder (1982) said that error analysis studied the characteristics of the second language learners' errors and confirmed or disproved the predictions of contrastive analysis. In this study, the errors were listed and classified into the first

language (Indonesian language) and the target language (English). The EFL learners were also asked to follow the rules of making a recount text. Then, the data were analyzed through the error analysis framework by James (2014) to find out whether the interlanguage was influenced by the first language (Indonesian language) or the target language (English).

In analyzing the data, sentences containing errors were taken into consideration. Those sentences were classified as examples of the students' interlanguage production. Following Fauziati (2017), the sentences which were taken into account when they were (1) appropriate but unacceptable, (2) acceptable but inappropriate, and (3) inappropriate as well as unacceptable. Besides, the sentences collected were compared with the grammar patterns of the native language and the target language. The comparison was made in order to trace whether either language influenced them. At last, the reasons of the influences were described and clarified.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Types of First Language Influence on the Students' Composition

Lexical and grammatical are two types of native language's aspects that influence the interlanguage. There are three types of lexical influence discovered in this study. They are the use of Indonesian lexical items, Indonesian cognate, and Indonesian acronym. Lexical influence provides borrowings and converts those three elements to sound and spell them more naturally. Then, the use of Indonesian collocation, conjunction, and the omission of the plural marker were the characteristics of grammatical influence.

Lexical Influence of the First Language on the Students' Composition

The first type of lexical influence is the use of Indonesian lexical items in the students' composition. The use of Indonesian lexical items in the students' sentences can be seen in examples (1) and (2).

- (1) 'Indigo hotel lobby concept *Bale Banjar*'.
- (2) 'It is located at *Jalan* Camplung Tanduk, number 10, Kuta, Badung regency, Bali'.

In example (1), the word of *Bale Banjar* refers to a place where the community in an area gathering to discuss the issue and make preparation for ceremonies together. Moreover, in example (2), *jalan* refers to the road. Both words of *bale banjar* and *jalan* are Indonesian words which are genuinely understandable for students who learn English as a second language. Meanwhile, it is not natural for foreigners. The name *banjar* may be firmly rooted in the students' culture, and sometimes they forget to translate into English.

The second type is the use of Indonesian cognate. Cognates are words similar in form and meaning from two languages (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). The data where the students used Indonesian cognates can be seen in examples (3)-(8).

- (3) 'They made all *furnitur* from Balinese equipment'.
- (4) 'Before that, we met in front of the *lobi* Kampus Bawah'.
- (5) 'They gave us a welcome food and *baverage*'.
- (6) 'I was look so many *fasilitis* in there such as restaurant, bar, and Spa'.
- (7) 'We went to Indigo hotel because our department has a *program* called KSL (Kegiatan Studi Lapangan)'.

(8) 'He was the *alumny* of English for Tourism Undiksha'.

In the examples (3)-(8), the students used Indonesian cognates in their writing such as *furnitur* 'furniture', *lobi* 'lobby', *baverage* 'beverage', *fasilitis* 'facilities', *program* 'programme', *studi* 'study' and *alumny* 'alumnus'. The students believed that these words are similar between Indonesian and English in terms of their forms and meanings. The students used this type of lexical cognates because they have problems in expressing their ideas in English. They believed that these Indonesian words are written in the same spelling in English.

The last type is the use of the Indonesian acronyms which can be seen in the examples (9) and (10).

(9) 'I and the third of student Diploma 3 English Department held an activity that is called *KSL (Kegiatan Studi Lapangan)*'.

(10) 'This is a routine program for students of *D3* English Study Program in the third semester to introduce the students about the hospitality industry'.

In examples (9) and (10), the acronyms used were *KSL* (field trip study) and *D3* (Diploma 3). Both of these words are written in Indonesian words. The abbreviations are mostly used because the students assumed that those terms are already in English. Therefore, the students wrote acronyms because they want to fill the gaps in their knowledge of English vocabulary.

Grammatical Influence of the First Language on the Students' Composition

The grammatical influence of the first language (Indonesian Language) on the students' composition includes the use of Indonesian collocation, the use of the conjunction, and the omission of plural markers.

The use of Indonesian collocation mostly appears when the students write the words that similar meaning in English. They also assume that the Indonesian words are already translated well. This type does not work for English native speakers, even though Indonesian people expect the terms are correctly used. The use of Indonesian collocation can be seen in examples (11)-(13).

(11) 'I got learned the experience from the staff and also Ms. Kharis as Assistant Manager at Indigo hotel.'

(12) 'Up there, we were given a tour of the hotel.'

(13) 'Inspired by the rich taste, culture, and character of the surrounding area, traditional Balinese designs are carefully integrated with an electric modern soul that reflect the Seminyak area which has a larger selection of fashion boutique and famous.'

From the example (11), it shows the translation from Indonesian words *I mendapat* 'got' *belajar* 'learned'. In English, we say 'I learned' or 'I got'. In example (12), the phrase 'up there' is a translation from Indonesian *di atas sana*. The student can change the words into 'there' to show their location, which is easily understood by a native speaker. In example (13), the phrase 'rich taste' is the literal translation from Indonesian *kaya* 'rich' and *rasa* 'taste'. The student's sentence of *kaya rasa* refers to beautiful properties and designs of the hotel, whereas in English, it usually refers to describe foods. These collocations are not matching to the object. The students tried to describe the hotel design by using the words rich and taste. The examples (11)-(13) illustrate how Indonesian collocation influenced the students' composition.

The second type is the use of a conjunction. A conjunction is a word which merely connects two words, phrases, and sentences. If people do not use conjunction correctly, every sentence will be short and unrelated. The sentences which are related to each other in meaning may be combined using a connection that indicated the relationship between the two sentences (Pangaribuan, et al., 2018). Nonetheless, the students under study cannot differentiate the types of conjunction, do not understand how to use the conjunction in a sentence, and are still confused to use the conjunction correctly. It is because the students might learn about conjunction at school. Meanwhile, they have less practice in using conjunction in written text (Panggabean, 2016). So, their understanding of the English conjunction came from the Indonesian structure. The use of conjunction can be seen in examples (14) and (15).

- (14) 'Our transport support by Undiksha bus and our snack and lunch also provide from our department'.
(15) 'And after the staff gave us information about the Indigo hotel, they invited us walked around at hotel to visit every department there'.

In example (14), we can see the students try to connect two sentences that unrelated to each other. They assume that the use of the conjunction in Indonesia is accepting in English sentences. Unfortunately, it is not familiar with English. Example (15) shows that the students still use the Indonesian structure where they put the conjunction in front of the sentence. Meanwhile, the conjunction should connect two sentences. Hence, the students have limited understanding of using the conjunction.

The students' compositions also include the omission of plural markers. It is because Indonesian language does not have plural markers. For examples the words 'facility(-ies)', 'outlet(s)', 'bar(s)', 'room(s)', 'student(s)', 'accommodation(s)', 'participant(s)', 'drink(s)', and 'explanation(s)'.

Types of the Target Language Influence on the Students' Compositions

From the target language, there are two types of influence, namely lexical and grammatical influence. The lexical influence was characterized by the lexical similarity in meaning and form, whereas the grammatical influence was in the types of passive voice, the omission of BE, and verb tense.

Lexical Influence of the Target Language on the Students' Compositions

The students were still confused about using English words in their compositions. In students' writings, there were four lexical influences which are similar in the meaning that can be seen in examples (16)-(23).

- (16) 'We waste three hours to go there.'
(17) 'We went there using Undiksha bus'.
(18) 'We went to Indigo hotel using the Undiksha bus'.
(19) 'We went with Undiksha bus'.
(20) 'We departed from campus to Seminyak by using the Undiksha bus'.
(21) 'Our transport by using Undiksha bus'.
(22) 'I went there with my classmate who numbered 19 people.'
(23) 'Ms. Kharisma open the presentation and followed by Mr. Yogi.'

In example (16), the words 'spend' and 'waste' can be translated into Indonesian as *menghabiskan*. In examples (17)-(21), the words 'using', 'with', and 'by' are misused. These words replace the Indonesian word *menggunakan*. Similarly, in example (22), the students also misuse 'numbered' and 'consist of'. 'Numbered' and 'consist of' are used to tell the number of people or things. Here, the students thought that they could use the word 'numbered' because its translation is *berjumlah*. Example (23) shows that the words 'open' and 'start' have different meanings; 'open' is *membuka* while 'start' is *memulai*. However, in this case, the students used them as words in the same purpose.

The students are not only confused with words that are similar in meaning but also similar in the form in English. The data that shows the students' confusion of similar meaning and form of English can be seen in the examples (24)-(27).

(24) 'For this program I also know about the *existance* of luxury in Bali.'

(25) 'The students can get a free style to *develope* the personal skill.'

(26) 'They gave us welcome food and *baverage*.'

(27) 'From this activity, we learned many thinks, got a lot of *knowladge* about tourism.'

In example (24), the student writes the word 'existance' which should be written 'existence'. Example (25) shows the word 'develope' which should be changed into 'develop'. Moreover, in example (26), the word 'baverage' should become 'beverage'. In example (27), the word 'knowladge' and 'thinks' should be 'knowledge' and 'things'.

In addition, the students mostly write English words in the wrong spelling. For examples: *loby* 'lobby', *gathred* 'gathered', *torism* 'tourism', *achiev* 'achieve', *suceesful* 'succesful', *carrer* 'career', *fasilitis* 'facilities', *intresting* 'interesting', and *furnitur* 'furniture'. The students wrote those words because they are lack of vocabulary and spellings of English words. They just know how to pronounce it without looking at the letters of the words.

Grammatical Influence of the Target Language on the Students' Compositions

There are three types of grammatical influences of the target language, namely passive voice, omission of BE, and verb tense. These types are mostly used in writing text where the Indonesian students under study are still confused about how to use them correctly.

The first type was the use of passive voice. Passive voice is used to show interest in person or object that experiences an action. In students' composition, the use of passive voice can be seen in the examples (28)-(32).

(28) 'At the loby 'we are diserve' with a unique drink that can change the color of that drink.'

(29) 'Indigo hotel located in Seminyak Bali'.

(30) 'Our transport support by Undiksha bus'.

(31) 'This activity called *KSL*'.

In example (28), the student makes passive voice by adding affix in front of the English word that is 'we are diserve'. 'We are diserve' refers to *kami disediakan* in Indonesian. Examples (29)-(31) show that the students are unable to apply passive voice.

The second type of grammatical influence is the omission of copula BE. The students' compositions that omit the use of copula BE can be seen in examples (32)-(35).

- (32) 'The design of the hotel also very good.'
- (33) 'Indigo hotel nice and luxurious hotel'.
- (34) 'I really happy because I got a lot of information about this hotel';
- (35) 'She shared the information about the facilities and accommodation that available in that hotel'.

The data (32)-(35) are the examples of students' compositions which omit the copula BE. It means the students cannot differentiate when they should put the copula BE.

The third is the use of verb tense. The students may be confused to put the correct verb based on the situation. When they had experienced in the past, but they told it in the present, they do not know what verb should be used. The data of the students' composition in using verb tense can be seen in examples (36)-(44).

- (36) 'I 'learn' about hotel, what are include in hotel, what are the basic of tourism and how to compete in the world of tourism,'
- (37) 'We 'listen' to the presentation from the Assistant Training General Manager and Inspiration Maker.'
- (38) 'We 'go' there with 20 participants.'
- (39) 'I also 'know' and learned how to work in hospitality industry in reality.'
- (40) 'When we 'arrive' at the hotel, the staff has been prepared the welcome drink.'
- (41) 'They 'introduce' about the facility in the hotel.'
- (42) 'After the sun 'get' down, the staff 'prepare' the food and beverage for dinner.'
- (43) 'After that, we 'continue' our program which is listening to information about Indigo hotel.'
- (44) 'He 'shares' information about Indigo hotel; and Mr. Yogi 'open' the presentation.'

In examples (36)-(44), the students write the English words in the form of present tense. They assume that the terms are the same when they write the event that happens in the past. It shows the students are still lack of the use of verb tenses. They may forget about the use of the verb tense.

The result of this study also corresponds to the previous studies about Interlanguage in Indonesian EFL compositions by Fauziati in 2017. The results reveal that their target language influenced the students' compositions. Fauziati (2011) found that their target language development mostly influences the students' interlanguage. Then, Darussalam (2013) found that the students relied their linguistic knowledge on the target language rather than their first language where they misused some words with similar meaning in their sentences. Lestari (2016) agreed that the target language mostly influences the learners' interlanguage. It is shown from the influence frequency of the mother tongue to students' interlanguage system, which is 48%. The target language to the students' interlanguage system is 52% which means that English mostly influences the students. The students tend to use English because they want to know how to pronounce some vocabularies correctly, they also write in English for English-related subject as well as improving their English structure (Purnamasari, et al., 2016). If they want to improve their English skill, the students

should learn more and practice more on how to write in English appropriately as well as they also should aware of the English rules to make them easily in applying the English words.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the students' interlanguage production is influenced by both Indonesian language as the native language (NL) and English as the target language (TL). The influences were found in both lexical and grammatical form. There are three types of lexical influence from the Indonesian language discovered in this study. They are the use of Indonesian lexical items, Indonesian cognate, and Indonesian acronym. Then, the use of Indonesian collocation, conjunction, and the omission of the plural marker were the characteristics of grammatical influence from the Indonesian Language. In the target language, the lexical influence was characterized by the lexical similarity in meaning and form. In the grammatical patterns, the students are having problems in applying passive voice, omitting BE, and verb tense confusion. This study implies that in learning a foreign language, errors are made by students and by knowing the errors, teachers and tutors can apply appropriate strategies and materials to enhance learning.

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