

## The Syntactical Interference of Indonesian Language by Indonesian in Speaking English

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### ABSTRACT

*Sociolinguistics is a discipline that focuses on the study of linguistic variation. It claims that in multilingual culture where some languages coexist in a society, they affect each other, such as in Indonesia. Thus, Interlanguage could happen in this area. A person who is bilingual or multilingual, usually finds a problem in speech as an effect of language contact. This phenomenon is called interference. This study aims to elaborate on the kinds of syntactical interference and to describe the most frequent syntactical interference made by the elite group of Indonesia in speaking English. Another purpose of this research is to disclose the factors that make the elite group of Indonesia do those kinds of syntactical interference in speaking English. The researcher collected the primary data from 20 respondents of the Indonesian elite group by conducting interviews and recordings. The analysis was conducted by using descriptive quantitative and qualitative methods. The results show that the elite group of Indonesia makes several kinds of syntactical interference, including omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. This is caused by the unawareness in the effort to transfer the original structure of the Indonesian language into English. This research has significance as follows: (1) Theoretical benefit: this research, will show the most frequent syntactical interference produced by Indonesians in speaking English. (2) Practical benefit: It will give the readers insights and awareness about the various kinds of interference, especially in syntactical interference that usually emerges in English production.*

*Keywords: Omission, Addition, Misformation*

### ABSTRAK

Sosiolinguistik adalah salah satu cabang ilmu linguistik yang berfokus pada hubungan antara bahasa dan masyarakat. Ia mengklaim bahwa dalam budaya multibahasa di mana beberapa bahasa hidup berdampingan dalam masyarakat, mereka saling mempengaruhi, seperti di Indonesia. Dengan demikian, Interlanguage bisa terjadi di daerah ini. Seseorang yang multibahasa, dia biasanya menemukan masalah dalam berbicara sebagai efek dari kontak bahasa. Fenomena ini disebut sebagai interferensi. Penelitian ini bertujuan (1) menguraikan dan menunjukkan jenis interferensi sintaktikal oleh kelompok orang elit Indonesia dalam berbicara dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris, (2) memaparkan faktor yang membuat orang elit Indonesia melakukan interferensi sintaktikal. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif. Sampel yang diambil sebanyak 20 orang elit Indonesia yang berbicara dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dan merekam. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat berbagai jenis interferensi sintaktikal. Interferensi sintaktikal meliputi penghilangan unit, penambahan, kesalahan formasi, dan kesalahan

urutan. Faktor penyebab interferensi sintaktikal adalah ketidaksadaran mencoba memindahkan struktur asli bahasa Indonesia ke dalam struktur bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini memiliki signifikansi sebagai berikut: 1) Manfaat teoritis: penelitian ini, akan menunjukkan kesalahan sintaksis yang paling sering dilakukan oleh orang Indonesia dalam berbahasa Inggris. 2) Manfaat praktis: penelitian ini akan memberi wawasan dan kesadaran tentang berbagai jenis kesalahan, terutama dalam kesalahan sintaksis yang biasanya muncul dalam produksi bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Kelalaian, Penambahan, Misformatian

## Introduction

It is well-known that English is the most important international language, as well as the most common second or foreign language learned around the world. McArthur (1993:334) in paper of Kachru states that the spread of English described in the 'concentric circles'. The inner circle is where English functions as a first language, such as Australia and New Zealand. The 'outer circle' is represented by, for instance, India, Singapore, and the Philippines, where English is used as an institutionalized additional language. The last is the 'expanding circle' in which English is applied as a foreign language, such as in China, Thailand, Taiwan, Brunei, Japan, and Indonesia. Thus, in Indonesia, English is as a foreign language or it is as Indonesian English.

The learners of English language usually find some problems, such as they have to master the English language system as the target language. Besides, interference occurs as the different representation of the source language system in their language production.

Interference is a problem of language norm in speech as an effect of language contact done by bilingual or multilingual person. The primary focus in sociolinguistics is language use within a speech community. In multilingual area where many languages exist in a society, sociolinguistics notes that these languages can influence each other. The form of speakers' utterances is emphasized in sociolinguistics rather than the content of communication itself.

The influences of language elements from one language to another language cannot be ignored. Language contact would occur when a speaker uses two or more languages. Consequently, interference will emerge both in spoke and written form.

So, by the description of interference as a dominant factor in the language development, the researcher would like to do a research to help us to understand the kinds of interference of source language in English production. This research will differ from the previous research, that is not only focuses on the subject-verb agreement and consonant in phonological but also to many kinds of interference especially in syntactical interference.

The scope of the problem based on the reason above, the researcher would like to analyze the kinds of interference of Indonesian language by elite group of Indonesian in speaking English that covers syntactical interference especially by Makassarese, South Sulawesi.

These are some research questions in this research:

- 1) What kinds of syntactical interference do elite group of Indonesia make in speaking English ?
- 2) What is the most frequent syntactical interference produced by the elite group of Indonesia in speaking English ?

- 3) What are the factors that make the elite group of Indonesia do those kinds of syntactical interference in speaking English?

### **Review of Related Literature**

The researcher finds out some previous studies about the interference of source language to the target language that have been done by other people. They are:

Manrique (2012) concerned her research in mother tongue interference with foreign language: a case study about A2 Oral production in a Colombian Public University. Finding shows some advantages and disadvantages of using the mother tongue as a reference to speak in the foreign language, identifying the syntactical and morphological failures in participants' speech.

Arifin (2011) focused her writing on Interference: Its role in the target language mastery to Indonesian learners. This study was aimed at performing on how interference of someone's first language, here local and Indonesian language, influenced the mastery of foreign language to Indonesian language learners. It pointed at interference in phonology in which a Javanese who was mentioning some places which words were initiated with letter /b/, /d/, /g/, /j/, as mBandung, interference in morphological e.g. 'terpukul' becomes 'kepukul', 'tertabrak' becomes 'ketabrak', interference in sentences such as 'Rumahnya ayah Ali yang besar sendiri di kampung itu' in which it should be 'Rumah ayah Ali yang paling besar di kampung itu', and semantic interference, for instance: 'demokrasi', 'politik', and 'revolusi'.

Kirkpatrick (2008) concerned his project in English as the official working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Features and Strategies. He disclosed the selection of linguistic features- phonological and syntactical- that are shared by speakers of different varieties, and consider some of the communicative strategies including the lack of use of 'local' lexis. The finding is when the pronunciation is so far from a known standard pronunciation and when the word cannot be retrieved from the context, breakdown occurs. Whereas, in terms of the use of tense forms which is the main focus in syntactic features, there is remarkably little use of 'non-standard' forms.

Baloch (2013) emphasized her research on L1 (Arabic) interference in learning L2 (English): An Analysis of English Spelling Used by Arabic speakers at undergraduate level. It was a case study. The focus of this study was spelling mistakes done by undergraduate students while applying letter *b*, *p*, and *e*. The main point of this research was to analyze these spelling mistakes and noticed how mother tongue (Arabic) interfered in the learning of second language (English) in terms of spelling. After the careful analysis, the researcher concluded that the replacement of 'b' with 'p' and vice versa occurs because of the mother tongue interference. Students do not find 'p' in their mother tongue and they try to substitute it with the nearest letter in pronunciation in their mother tongue. Whereas, omission and addition of 'e' is concerned, it happens because the students do not find rules for 'e' in English spellings if it is places in the final position of a word.

Different from the previous research, this study focuses on the kinds of syntactical interference of first language to the second or foreign language. It aims to disclose the kinds of interference of Indonesian language by Indonesian in speaking English that covers syntactical interference.

## Theoretical Background

There are various kinds of terms and phrases have been used by researchers to refer to the phenomenon of cross-linguistic influence, namely language mixing, linguistic interference, language transfer, the role of the mother tongue and native language influence.

Weinrich (1963) as a researcher introduces interference as a term used to incorporate transfer cases. A definition of transfer is the one offered by Odlin (1989: 27) in Islam (2004): "Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other languages that have been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired."

### 1. The Notion of Interference

Language contact will happen if two or more languages were used interchangeably by a speaker. Thus, both in oral and written form will appear interference. Bilingualism or even multilingualism background normally will cause interference. Interference is a negative transfer that consists of errors. When the structures of two languages are different, errors are could be a high frequency in target language. It indicates that interference emerges of first language on second language.

The language learners hear and see the new language. In the second language learning environment the learners' intent is mastery of the target language by learning a second language close to it. So, an effective communication could be successful by organizing the knowledge of language learning into coherent structure in the target language.

These are the foundation definition of interference according to sociolinguists. Chaer (1998:159) clarified that Weinrich introduced the term interference firstly, who states bilingual person interacts with other people by using mentioned language in which occur a systemized change of certain language to element of other language.

Lott (1983:256) in Arifin proposed interference as errors in the learners use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue. Interference refers to entering elements of certain language outside the understanding of other languages, such as when a person speaks in English by using clause or phrases of Indonesian language.

By the definition above, the researcher gathers that interference is usually experienced by non-native speaker of certain language who studied second or foreign language. So, the elements of native language is transferred to the second or foreign language mastery.

Thus, Interference is a symptom of the biggest changes, the most important and dominant in language development. Symptoms of interference from one language to other languages are difficult to avoid. The occurrence of symptoms is also not free from the interference behavior of speakers of the recipient.

### 2. Interference in Communication

Interference in communication: (1) influence of language contact experienced by bilingual or multilingual person; (2) language infiltration that influence the system to both target and native language, causing negative effect; (3) personal utterances in a narrow space as a parole effect (speech).

### 3. Kinds of Interference

Jendra (1991:108) in Arifin (2011) divides interference of language into five facets, such as:

- Interference in the field of a system of sound (phonology)
- Interference in the formation of the word grammar (morphology)
- Interference in sentence grammar (syntax)
- Interference in the vocabulary (lexicon)

- e. Interference with the plane of the meaning (semantics)

## Method

### 1. Method for Collecting Data

In collecting the data, the researchers used recording technique. The researchers collected primary data from respondents by doing an interview. This research was held in Makassar, South Sulawesi, from 5 August to 12 August, 2023.

The researchers found some difficulties in collecting the data, such as the difficulty in arranging the meeting with some of the respondents, because as we know that all of them are office workers in which they have many responsibilities that should be done in their office. Besides, there was another trouble in recording the data in which the situation around the place of recording data is quite noise, because there were other officers went around in those area, but it was not a big problem because the respondents let the researcher record them in another quiet place.

### 2. Method for Analyzing Data

The researchers used the descriptive quantitative and qualitative method in analyzing the data. These methods were carried out with the following steps:

#### Step 1

The researchers made the transcription of all data. Then, she identified the interference on syntactical.

#### Step 2

The kinds of interference on syntactical in the data were recorded. The researchers then classified the collected data by tabulating them into a table. For instance:

Respondent	Data	Kinds of interference in syntax
I	1.	.....
	2.	.....
	3.	.....

#### Step 3

The researchers used descriptive qualitative in analyzing the data. She explained the various kinds of interference syntactical and made the reconstructions.

#### Step 4

To know the frequent types syntactical interference made by the respondents, the researchers used quantitative method and made a table as follow:

No.	Types of syntactical Interference	%	Number of syntactical Interference
1.	.....	... %	Data .....
2.	.....	... %	Data .....

The pattern used to get the percentage of data as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Frequency}}{\text{Total of interference}} \times 100\% = \dots \% \text{ Data}$$

## Step 5

Finally, some conclusions will be drawn by examining the table and their analyses.

### 3. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

#### a. The Population

The population of this research included by elite group of Indonesian especially in Makassar, South Sulawesi.

#### b. The Sample

From the population above, the researchers chose 20 people as the samples of this research by considering the ability of the elite group in speaking English. They are bank employees, doctors, lecturers, office-workers such as in BUMN, Pre-delivery Center of H. Kalla, BPJS, and civil servant include in immigration institute, teachers and headmasters.

Respondent 1 and 8 work in Perum Jamkrindo (BUMN), respondent 2 works in Pre-delivery Center of H. Kalla in Logistic Department, respondent 3 teaches in Athira Islamic School and he is a president of an English course namely FKBS, respondent 4, 9, and 14 work in Wahidin Sudirohusodo Hospital, respondent 5 having a job in BNI Syariah, respondent 6 is an employed in BTPN, respondent 7 works in BNI, respondent 10 works as an engineer, respondent 11 as a headmaster at SMP 1 Turikale, respondent 12 teaches at SMP 1 Turikale, respondent 13 having a job in BPJS, respondent 15 is as a lecturer in UIN Alauddin, respondent 16 teaches in SMA 3, respondent 17 is as a teacher in Ganesha Operation and as a lecturer in Islamic State University, respondent 18 is a civil servant in Immigration Institute, respondent 19 is a headmaster in SD Inpres Pajjaiyang, and respondent 20 works in Statistical Institute.

## Findings

### Data Description of Indonesian Syntactical Interferences

#### 1) OMISSION

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. In this study, the errors of omission are omission of content morpheme and omission of grammatical morpheme. All types are found in this study.

##### a) Omission of content morpheme

##### Type of Grammatical Interference: Omission of subject

A sentence is commonly defined as a complete unit of thought. The basic parts of a sentence are the subject and the verb. The sentences below are fragment because they require subject in order to be a well construction. The respondents have to add subject as content morpheme.

*Table 1 Type of Grammatical Interference: Omission of subject*

No.	Corpus	Correct sentence
1.	So far is running well for me because I have my team.	So far it is running well for me because I have a team.
2.	Sometime enjoy it but sometime no.	Sometime I enjoy it but sometime no.
3.	Sorry, only four.	Sorry, there are only four divisions.
4.	In Bekasi was a freelance doctor.	In Bekasi, I was a freelance doctor.
5.	no problem between us.	There is no problem between us.

The subject is usually a noun; a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea that is doing or being something. In a sentence, every verb must have a subject. Unlike English there is no use of an empty subject like *it* or *there* to express impersonal action or existential position. Examples in English are *It is rain* and *There are many universities in Makassar*. But in Indonesia no such empty subjects can be found. Rather impersonal subject or existential place or objects themselves become subject. Examples for Indonesian language sentences are like: “*sekarang hujan*”: It is raining, “*di Makassar banyak universitas*”: There are many universities in Makassar. Therefore, less proficient speakers in the conversation did not use such *there-be* structure in order to show existential location.

### Type of grammatical interferences: Omission of verb

**Table 2 Type of grammatical interferences: Omission of verb**

No.	Corpus	Correct sentence
1.	My hobby about music.	My hobby is about music.
2.	The sadness when they only a fews student register.	The sadness is when there are only few students register in our course.
3.	The second we can earn money from bank.	The second is we can earn money from the bank.

The verb usually follows the subject and identifies an action or a state of being. According to Alwasilah (1993: 118), a linking verb (copulative) connects a subject to a complement which tells something about the subject.

Auxiliary verbs in all tenses are the basic markers of tenses in English. To show tense variation in English, these auxiliary verbs are changed with the form of the main verb as well. For example: *I am eating rice* and *I have eaten rice*. But in Indonesia, there is no such rule or use of auxiliary verbs, though main verb forms are changed from one tense to another.

In English, the third person singular pronoun varies in terms of gender such as *he/she*, *him/her* and *his/her*. But no such variation occurs in the Indonesian language, i.e. both masculine and feminine gender shares the same form of pronoun. This lack of gender based pronouns in Indonesian language influences people to make syntactical interference like saying *he* for *she* and *she* for *he*. For example, the respondents said:

“*I discuss about our problem, our vision*” and “*Yes, I have a target and I think every single one have a target in their life*”.

### b) The use of preposition

**Table 17 Type of grammatical interferences: The use of preposition**

No.	Corpus	Correct sentence
1.	But in relation officer I think we are no problem.	But, I think the relation with the other officers have no problem.
2.	There are many like and dislike for my job.	There are many likes and dislikes of my job.

*Table 22 The frequent types of syntactical interference*

No.	Types of syntactical interference	%	Number of syntactical interference
	Omission		
	Omission of content morpheme		
1.	Omission of subject	9%	36
2.	Omission of verb	18%	73
	Omission of grammatical morpheme		
	Noun phrase		
3.	Determiner	4%	17
4.	The use of number	26%	104
5.	The use of pronoun	5%	18
6.	The use of preposition	3%	11
	Verb phrase		
7.	Omission of verb 'be'	1%	3
8.	Agreement of subject and verb	2%	8
9.	Omission "to be" in passive transformation	1%	4
	Addition		
	Noun phrase		
10.	The use of determiner	2%	6
11.	The use of preposition	1%	2
12.	Verb phrase	1%	2
	Misformation		
	Noun phrase		
13.	The use of determiner	1%	5
14.	Nominalization	2%	9
15.	The use of pronoun	2%	9
16.	The use of preposition	3%	12
	Verb phrase		
17.	The use of verb	5%	20
18.	Subject-verb agreement	3%	12
19.	Verb and verb construction	1%	5

## Discussion

There are several kinds of interference in English, namely morphological, syntactical, lexicon, semantic, and phonological. The present study seeks to identify those English structures especially in syntactical interference which presents special difficulties for elite group of Indonesian in speaking English.

Different from the previous research in which most of them focus on the phonological interference of first language to the second language, this research conducts on the syntactical interference of Indonesian Language by Indonesian in speaking English.

The data of this study are taken from the respondents of elite group of Indonesia. The data shows that all respondents doing some syntactical interference in their English spoken. In other words, it seems that they do not mastery grammar well, especially syntax as the important component of language.

Most of respondents have a tendency to think in their native language first before they produce any utterances in English. The word order or syntactic structures in their use of English are identical or very similar with the sentence structures of their first language. In the use of complex structures of English, syntactic transfers from Indonesian language are particularly common. These transfers are found among the people when they found it is difficult to use the target language structure.

In this research, the analysis of syntactical interference based on Politzer and Romirez's classification (1973) who studied American children lerning English in the United States. They classify it into noun phrase (determiners, nominalization, number, use of pronouns, use of preposition), verb phrase (omission of verb, use of progressive tense, subject-verb agreement), verb and verb construction, and word order.

In brief, in the description of syntactical interference the researcher uses surface strategy taxonomy based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's theory which consists of four categories, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Whereas, in classifying the syntactical interference, the researcher uses linguistic category taxonomy based on Politzer and Romirez's model as a guideline in which consists of five main categories, namely noun phrase, verb phrase, verb and verb constructions, word order, and transformation.

The results of the analysis show that the total number of syntactical interference is 393 sentences. They are 273 sentences of omission, 10 sentences of addition, 72 sentences of misformation, 14 sentences of misordering, 12 sentences of incorrect verbal aspect, 11 sentences of misuse of double verbs, and 1 sentence of misuse of plural word 'people'. It shows that syntactical interference of omission of grammatical morpheme especially in noun phrase that is the use of number is the most frequent type among the others.

The first syntactical interference is in omission can be categorized into omission of content morpheme includes omission of subject and omission of verb, omission of grammatical morpheme comprises of noun phrase, verb phrase, and transformation. Within the syntactical interference of omission found that the most predominant type in omission of content morpheme is omission of verb. Whereas, there is also another omission found in this study, they are omission of grammatical morpheme consists of noun phrase and verb phrase category.

The second syntactical interference found in this study is addition. Within the syntactical interference in addition, the researcher finds noun phrase and verb phrase category in which noun phrase category is the most numerous type, in which the respondents tend to add article and preposition in sentences.

The third syntactical interference ascertained in this study is misinformation types in which it divides into noun phrase and verb phrase. The syntactical interference in the data betrays verb phrase as a most frequent type. Although, it is quiet similar with noun phrase. The syntactical interference in verb phrases found in this study is the use of certain tense, verb and verb construction, and subject-verb agreement. Whereas, noun phrase found show that the respondents often make syntactical interference in using preposition, nominalization, determiner and pronoun.

The fourth syntactical interference made by elite group of Indonesia in speaking English is misordering. It is one of problems for the respondents. The researcher finds some sentences from the data. It shows that some of them have not already mastered English rules in how to place the words into the right position to construct a well-formed sentence. In addition, the other kinds of syntactical interference are incorrect verbal aspect, misuse of double verbs, and misuse of word 'people'.

Based on the discussion above, this finding proves that omission of grammatical morpheme namely the use of number and omission of content morpheme that is omission of subject and omission of verb are considered difficult grammatical structures for elite group of Indonesia in speaking English.

By referring to the surface strategy taxonomy based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's theory (1999) and classification of Politzer and Romirez's (1973) as a guideline, and by comparing it with the finding of this research, the researcher finds some phenomena of syntactical interference when Indonesian especially elite group in speaking English. For instance incorrect verbal aspect, such as 'I enjoy work here' that should be 'I enjoy working here', misuse of double verbs like 'we are spend much time, in which should be 'we spend much time', concord especially in pronoun concord that is collective noun such as 'people', verb patterns especially in verb + to infinitive 'want open account' that should be 'want to open account', modals, part of speech in which there are many words in Bahasa Indonesia that are taken from English language such as *sukses*.

As the structures of first language and second language have differences, there has been a relatively high frequency of interference emerging in the target language. It occurs because the habitual way of

uttering the structure of English. Hence, this research contributes significantly to the base knowledge of syntactical interference of elitegroup of Indonesia in speaking English.

Indonesian can realize that when they speaking English, they tend to be influenced by their first language in which there are many differences of the structure of sentences. They tend to transfer the sentence structure of Indonesian language to the structure of English sentences.

Therefore, the researchers suggest that Indonesian have to pay attention to the some kinds of syntactical interference that always occur especially to the most frequent syntactical interference that produced by Indonesian in speaking English. So, this research can give an important contribution to the English teaching process, especially in speaking. By considering the most frequent syntactical interference that is in omission of grammatical morpheme and content morpheme, the structure of noun phrase and verb phrase, the teachers can know in which part of sentence structure that should be emphasized in their explanation to the learners of English. It aims to improve their ability in applying sentence structure of English especially in speaking to make well formed structure in English.

## Conclusion

- 1) Most of respondents still make some syntactical interference in speaking English. The kinds of syntactical interference that elite group of Indonesia make in speaking English are Omission, Addition, Misformation, Misordering, and other kinds such as incorrect verbal aspect, misuse of double verbs in English, and the misuse of the word 'people'.
- 2) The most frequent type of syntactical interference made by elite group is omission of grammatical morpheme in noun phrase that is the use of number. The percentage of the types of syntactical interference is omission (69%), addition (4%), misformation (17%), misordering (3%), and other kinds of syntactical interference (7%).
- 3) The factors that make the elite group of Indonesia do some kinds of syntactical interference are unawareness attempt to transfer to English certain native Indonesian language structures. The difference of structures between Indonesian language and English directly influences all the respondents. Another cause is as the result of misinterpretations and of syntactic overgeneralization in which it causes grammatical simplification of the rules of English grammar. However, this interference is more frequent among speakers at lower levels of proficiency though it may occur as a slip of the tongue for all level of users.

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