'I THINK THAT AUSTRALIA IS A NICE COUNTRY': AN INTERLANGUAGE ANALYSIS OF AN EFL LEARNER STUDYING IN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract: Studies on interlanguage in English learning in countries where English as a foreign language have been highlighted for decades. Interlanguage is the type of language produced by second- and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a language. This single-participant study is intended to investigate and analyse the English competence of an Indonesian student who learns English as a foreign language. The study reveals that there are four major errors areas in the learner language, such as past tense, plural form 's', quantifiers, and subject-verb agreement. The source of the learner's errors might be due to the interference of the learner's first language, intralingual factors, incomplete application of rules in the target language, failure in comprehending the rules, and the learner's communication strategies.

Keywords: *Interlanguage, Developmental Stages in Learner Language, Error Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Various approaches have been developed through the years in the attempt to elucidate second language learning. Weinreich paved the way for scholarly studies on SLA by proposing *Language Contact* in 1950's. Lado projected *Contrastive Analysis* which was followed by Chomsky's *Language Acquisition Devices*. In 1970's, Nemser coined the term *Approximative Systems* to develop second language acquisition theories, whereas Selinker coined the term *Error Analysis* as a basis to examine the learners' interlanguage. From this point on, the study of interlanguage phenomena in the learning of English in countries where English as a foreign language has been highlighted (Cook, 1993, 2016).

This single-participant study is intended to investigate and analyse interlanguage performed by an adult Indonesian learner of English who is currently studying at an Australian university. To begin with, we discuss theoretical backgrounds of interlanguage, developmental stages in learner language, and error analysis. We then elaborate the interlanguage analysis of the adult Indonesian learner of English based on the theory of error analysis.

INTERLANGUAGE

In his seminal work, *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics,* Richards (2010, p.186) defines interlanguage as "the type of language produced by second- and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a language." In other words, the learner's language system is not the system of either their native language or second language. It is a system based on the learner's best effort to produce the second language. The learner's language, therefore, contains some elements of both languages (L1 and L2).

Selinker (1972, cited in Ellis, 2008) uses the term interlanguage to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learners' L1 and the target language. Furthermore, he proposes five underlying factors in interlanguage as follows:
1. Language transfer
   It means the learners use their own L1 as a resource and therefore, there is a negative transfer of aspects of L1 into the L2.

2. Overgeneralization

In this case, the learners use an L2 rule in situations in which a native speaker would not. This can occur at several levels such as phonetic, grammatical, lexical and discourse levels.

3. Transfer of training

This process may happen when teaching of target language creates language rules that are not part of the L2. Consequently, the learners will use the forms that they know rather than try out ones that they are not sure of.

4. Strategies of L2 learning

Simplification is one example of a learning strategy. The learners simplify the target language and do this, probably, because they cannot produce the target language forms or they are not sure.

5. Communication strategies

The learners leave out grammatical items that encumber their speech in conversations.

Unlike contrastive analysis which believes that language learning is the result of imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit formation, these five central processes argue that transfer or interference is not the only explanation for all of learners' difficulties with the target language. Interference presumably takes place whenever the habits of the learners' native language are different from those of the target language.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN LEARNER LANGUAGE

Studies on both first and second language acquisitions have culminated in a conclusion that language acquisition flows in developmental stages and the stages are orderly sequenced. Many of the developmental sequences in the first and second language learners are similar. Even remarkably, second language learners of different first language backgrounds and learning environments share similar developmental sequences. It means that the things learned early by one learner are also learned early by others (Ellis, 2008).

In second language acquisition, early stage learners are characterized by three traits. The first is *silent period.* Not all learners experience this period. Usually it happens to children not in adult since adult learners have already known the rules of their first languages. The second characteristic is *formulaic speech*. Early learners tend to use expressions or utterances which are learned as memorized chunks extensively. The last characteristic is *structural and semantic simplification* especially in unplanned language use (Ellis, 2008).

As mentioned above, there are some similarities and differences between L1 and L2 sequences. The following table compares the sequences of grammatical morphemes between L1 and L2 (Brown, 1973 &Dulay and Burt, 1974, cited in Cook, 1993, 2016). The grammatical morphemes are acquired starting from the top to the bottom.

FIRST LANGUAGE	SECOND LANGUAGE
Present progressing *–ing*	Articles '*a*'/'*the*'
Plural *–s*	Present progressing *–ing*
Past irregular	Plural *–s*
Possessive *–s*	Past regular *–ed*
Articles '*a*'/'*the*'	Past irregular
Past regular *–ed*	Possessive *–s*
Third person singular *–s*	Third person singular *–s*

ERROR ANALYSIS

Learners make errors in both comprehension and production. The main focus of second language research is on production errors. The study of errors is conducted through *Error Analysis* (EA). This kind of analysis replaces *Contrastive Analysis* (CA) which attempts to predict the learners' errors by identifying the linguistic differences between the learners' L1 and L2. Unlike CA, *Error Analysis* looks at only the learner's native language and the target language and it provides a methodology for investigating learner language. A learner's errors provide evidence of the system of the language that he has learned (Ellis, 2008).

In conducting an *Error Analysis* research, Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 2008) proposes five steps as follow:

1. Collection of a sample of learner language

In this first step, a researcher must decide what samples of learner language are used for the analysis and how to collect the samples. Based on the size of sample, there are three types of *Error Analysis*. The first type kind is *a massive sample* which requires several samples of language use from a large number of learners. The second type is *a specific sample* which involves one sample of language use collected from a limited number of learners. The last type is an *incidental sample* which engages with only one sample of language use produced by a single learner.

2. Identification of errors

Corder (1967, cited in Richards, 2015) argues *error* is different from *mistake.* He defines *error* as a deviation in learner language which results from lack of knowledge of the correct rule. Contrastively, *mistake* is a deviation in learner language that occurs when learners fail to perform their competence. Furthermore, he suggests that *Error Analysis* should be restricted to two kinds of error, namely overt error and covert error. Overt error is a deviation in the surface form of learner's utterances, while covert error is a deviation in which the learner's meaning intention is taken into account.

3. Description of errors

This step involves a comparison between the learner's idiosyncratic utterances with a reconstruction of those utterances in the target language. In this stage, there is no explanation about the sources of errors. Descriptive taxonomies of errors such as linguistic classification and surface strategy might be needed.

Concerning types of errors based on their systematicity, Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 2008) describes three types of errors as follows:

   a. Pre-systematic errors which takes place when the learner is not aware of the existence of a certain rule in the target language.
   b. Systematic errors which happens when the learner has discovered a rule, but it is the incorrect one.
   c. Post-systematic errors which occurs when the learner know the correct rule of the target language, but he uses it inconsistently.

4. Explanation of Errors

After identifying and describing the errors, this step requires the researcher to find out the sources of errors found. In this stage, a researcher tries to establish the processes for the second language acquisition.

There are various sources of errors which have been identified by some researchers. Richards (1971, cited in Ellis, 2008) classifies three sources of errors as follow:

   a. Interference errors which is a result of 'the use of element from one language while speaking another'.
   b. Intralingual errors which consist of overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized.
   c. Developmental errors which take place when the learner tries to build up a hypothesis about the target language with his limited experience.

5. Evaluation of Errors

This step involves a consideration of the effect of errors on the person/s addressed. This effect can be measured in terms of the addressee's comprehension of the learner's meaning or in the terms of the addressee's affective response to the errors.

THE STUDY

This interlanguage analysis of an English as a foreign language leaner is qualitative in nature and follows a hermeneutic/interpretive paradigm. Studies in the hermeneutic/interpretive model do not utilise any experimentation and stringent measurement; they rely on the interpretative analysis of written and verbal accounts from the participants. The researchers interpret and elaborate the data collected from the respondents descriptively and only calculate data using statistical procedures when necessary (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Cohen et al., 2017).

The present qualitative study is organized in accordance with the steps of conducting an *error analysis* proposed by Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 2008). There are, however, only four steps involved in this study, i.e., collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors. The last stage of error analysis is not included since the objective of the study is mainly describing the rules underlying the learner language.

Collection of a Sample of Learner Language

This study is a single-participant study and the type of sample used is categorized as an incidental sample since it involves only one learner as the participant (Forbes et al., 2011; Griffee, 2012; Huitema, 2010; Kazdin, 2010). The participant is a 29 year–old female adult learner from Indonesia. She is a postgraduate student majoring in natural sciences at an Australian university.

Regarding her English proficiency, the participant is in the upper-intermediate level and has been learning English formally for seven years. In preparation for her study in Australia, she had attended *Intensive English for Academic Purposes* courses both in Indonesia and in Australia for six months. When the interview was conducted on 9 April 2018, she had been living in Australia for nearly six months. For ethical reasons, we are not allowed to mention the participant's real name and her university in Australia.

The samples of the learner language were collected cross-sectionally through an interview with the participant. The topics of the interview were daily topics such as the participant's expectations, hobbies, past experiences, and future plans. The thirty-minute-interview was conducted in the participant's apartment in order to make her relaxed and convenient. The equipment used in recording the interview was a Sony cassette mini recorder equipped with an external microphone.

Identification of Errors

This study focuses on finding and analysing errors rather than mistakes. The errors identified are categorized as overt errors since the analysis of the data examines only deviations in correctness. Moreover, this study is targeted to look at grammatical morphemes such as past tense, plural and others.

Having completed the interview, we transcribed the recorded dialogue. Afterwards, we started to identify the errors concerning with grammatical morphemes found in the data. There were some predominant areas of error in the learner language. Those were past tense, plural form 's', articles, quantifiers, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement. Nevertheless, this study only focusses on four major areas; past tense, plural form 's', quantifiers, and subject-verb agreement because they are the most frequent errors found in the learner's interlanguage.

Description of Errors

In this section, the types of errors are discussed in depth. The correct and incorrect forms made by the participant are shown in tables.

1. Past Tense

It is shown in the transcription that the learner employed past tense many times in order to explain her past experiences. In some cases, this learner was able to use the tense correctly, but in most cases, she made numerous errors. The following tables illustrate the correct and incorrect forms of past tense. In Table 1, bold print words are the learner's correct forms of past tense. Meanwhile, bold print words in Table 2 indicate the learner's incorrect past tense forms and the correct forms in the target language column.

Table 1: Correct use of past tense in the learner's language

LINE	INTERLANGUAGE FORM
8	I **came** ee last January
16	....before I **came** here
40	....when I **was** in senior high school
64	....when I **was** in bachelor degree.... so I **was**
99	.... I visit Bali - I **visited** Bali

Table 2: Incorrect use of paste tense the learner's language

LINE	INTERLANGUAGE FORM	TARGET LANGUAGE FORM
16	I **think** that Australia **is** a nice country, **is** a clean	I **thought** that Australia **was** a nice country, **was** a clean
17	I **think** that Australia have	I **thought** that Australia has

42	I **enjoy** my senior high school	I **enjoyed** my senior high school
42	there **are** many experience	there **were** many experiences
45	Ee I **join** ee what is called	Ee I **joined** ee what is called
49	Yes I **join** Red Cross and I ee **win** some competitions	Yes I **joined** Red Cross and I ee **won** some competitions
50	ee I **get** ee trophies, so it **is** very interesting	ee I **got** ee trophies, so it **was** very interesting
55	situation **is** so different from … I **am** more serious	situation **was** so different from … I **was** more serious
56	the subjects **is** difficult	the subjects **were** difficult
57	my friends **is** also serious	my friends **were** also serious
58	so it **is** so different. I **enjoy** my senior high	so it **was** so different. I **enjoyed** my senior high
59	I **can** play (#) with my (#) friends	I **could** play (#) with my (#) friends
64	the lecturer **is** so dominant	the lecturer **was** so dominant
65	the students **is** passive	the students **were** passive
82	I mean they **study** in Monash University	I mean they **studied** at Monash University
93	I also **enjoy** but you know	I also **enjoyed** but you know
101	just **go** to places like Kuta	just **went** to places like Kuta
102	I **enjoy** travelling in Bali, it **is** very beautiful	I **enjoyed** travelling in Bali, it **was** very beautiful

The table above shows that the learner tended to make errors in applying the rule of past tense in expressing her ideas of something that happened in the past. The next table shows the past verbs which were used correctly by the learner. These verbs are either regular or irregular verbs.

Table 3: correct past forms of verbs in the learner's language

CORRECT VERBS		
Line	**Regular**	**Irregular**
8,16	–	came
40,64	Was	–
99	Visited	–

The table above indicates that the learner had knowledge about few regular past verb forms. She also produced only one correct form of irregular past verb, that is, *came.*

The next table demonstrates the incorrect past verb forms made by the learner in expressing the past activities. The verbs in the table are the corrected forms. All of the following verbs are derived from Table 2.

Table 4: The corrected past verb forms and past modal form from the incorrect past verbs form made by the learner.

CORRECTED PAST VERB FORMS		
Line	**Regular**	**Irregular**
16,50,55, 58,64,102	Was	–
16	–	thought
42,58,102	Enjoyed	–
42,56,57, 65,102	Were	–
45,49	Joined	–
49	–	Won
50	–	Got
82	Studied	–
101	–	Went

CORRECTED PAST MODAL FORM	
Line	**Form**
59	Could

The table above shows that the learner had difficulties in producing irregular past verb forms. Her control of regular past verb forms was also somewhat weak. The discussion of the detailed feature and underlying rules of the learner language are elaborated in the explanation of errors.

2. Plural Form and Quantifiers

The second area of errors found in the learner language is the use of regular plural form and quantifiers. The correct application of plural forms and quantifiers is used in the *Table 5* below. Furthermore, the incorrect use of plural forms is revealed in *Table 6*.

Table 5: Correct plural forms and quantifiers of learner language

CORRECT PLURAL FORMS AND QUANTIFIERS	
Line	**Learner Language**
6	**three months** (#) almost **four months**
28	**western countries**
30	I will be here for **two years**
49	**some competitions**
66	read **many books**
67	**many discussions**
81	**many** of my **lecturers**

Table 6: Incorrect plural forms and quantifiers found in the learner language

INCORRECT PLURAL FORMS AND QUANTIFIERS		
Line	**INTERLANGUAGE FORM**	**TARGET LANGUAGE FORM**
24	**many garbage**	**much garbage**
43	**many experience**	**many experiences**
94	**some tourism spot**	**some tourism spots**

The two tables above indicate that the learner had partly mastered the rule and the application of plural forms as well as quantifiers in English. More detailed explanation about the underlying pattern of plural forms and quantifiers in the learner's language are discussed in the explanation of errors.

3. Subject-Verb Agreement

The participant had minor problems in subject-verb agreement. The following tables illustrate the correct and incorrect use of subject-verb agreement.

Table 7: Correct subject-verb agreement of learner language

CORRECT USE OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT	
Line	**Learner Language**
4	**this is** my first time
12	**the study is** more difficult
16	**I think** that **Australia is** a nice country
17	**it's** a modern country
24	**I think** that you know **Australia is** not very clean
27	**the technology is** not
35	**I teach** in university
39	**I think** that **the best experience in my life is**
42	**I enjoy** my senior high school
50	**it is** very interesting for me
55	**I am** more serious

58	**I enjoy** my senior high school
64	ehm **the lecturer is** so dominant
68	**it is** very - very difficult
73	**they are** better
74	they are ee **they are** smart
82	**they study** in Monash University
85	**the public transportation is** easy
88	**it is** easy I enjoy - **I enjoy** travelling here
102	**I enjoy** travelling in Bali, it is –**it is** very beautiful in Bali
111	**that's** my dream
112	**I want** to be ee a professor

Table 8: Incorrect subject-verb agreement of learner language

INCORRECT USE OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT		
Line	INTERLANGUAGE FORM	TARGET LANGUAGE FORM
17	**Australia have** high technology	**Australia has** high technology
24	there **are** many (#) many **garbage**	there **is** much **garbage**
56	**the subjects is** difficult	**the subjects were** difficult
57	**my friends is** also serious	**my friends were** also serious
65	**the students is** passive	**the students were** passive
73	**lecturers** in Indonesia **is** also good	**lecturers** in Indonesia **are** also good
81	**many of my lecturers ee is** from	**many of my lecturers ee are** from
93-94	**the service and the facility** in some tourism spot **is** not	**the service and the facility** in some tourism spot **are** not
103	**people is** right	**people are** right

From the two tables above, it is evident that the learner had comparably good control in subject-verb agreement for certain subjects in making her utterances, although in some occasions she did it inaccurately.

Explanation of Errors

In this section, the three areas of errors mentioned earlier are discussed in detail. The explanation includes the rules underlying the learner language for each type of errors as well as the causes of the existed errors.

1. Past tense

Based on the tables showing the errors made by the learners in producing past verb forms, we assume that this learner had only partial command in marking past tense. The learner knew that she had to use past tense sentences whenever she was asked about occurrences happened in the past. She, however, did not have a full understanding about how to construct past tense sentences correctly. There is a tendency that she employed marked verbs for past tense in clauses which function as past time signal. Take for example the following sentences:

(40) **when I was** in senior high school. Ehm
(64) **when I was** in bachelor degree ehm the lecturer *is* so dominant so I was ee the students–the students *is* passive just *listen* to the lecturer

All of the time clauses (when- clauses) use the correct marked verb. Nevertheless, after this clause (in line 64) she did not mark the verbs to indicate past tense (the italic words). Once she marked the first verb with past form to indicate that she was talking about something happened in the past, she did not change the other following verbs into past forms. This can be shown in the following example:

(16) Ee **before I came here**, I *think* that Australia *is* a nice country, *is* a clean and (#) yeah it's a modern country. So also I *think* that Australia *have* high technology

In this sentence, she did not mark the words *think, is, have* as past verb form because the past tense form is already marked by the word *came* at the beginning of the sentence.

Another underlying pattern of this learner language of past tense is that when she was asked to tell her experience in the past, she began her answers by using past verb form for her first predicate. Later, when she continued her stories related to the same question, she did not mark all the verbs in her utterances. This pattern can be seen in the following sentences:

(8)   I **came** ee last January
(16) Ee before I **came** here, I think that
(40) in my life is when I **was** in senior high school.

In those three sentences above, she immediately marked the verbs in past tense because she knew that the questions were dealing with her past experiences. She, however, did not mark the verbs in her sentences correctly when she tried to give further information or she continued her sentences. This can be revealed in the following sentences:

(39) I think that the best experience in my life is when I **was** in senior high school. Ehm
(42) I **enjoy** my senior high school very much ee because that ehm there **are** many experience in senior high school
(49) Yes I **join** Red Cross and I ee **win** some competitions in Red Cross competitions ee I **get** ee trophies, so it **is** very interesting for me

Sentences in line 42 and line 49 utilize present tense although they indicate the learner's past experience in senior high school. It happens because those sentences only continue her answer in line 39. Therefore, since she had marked the past tense in line 39, she did not mark all *verbs* and *be* in the following sentences (line 42 and 49).

It is also very interesting to see that she marked *be* in past form whenever it is preceded by subject *I* (*I* + past form of be). We can find this trend in the sentences below:

(40)   when I **was** in senior high school
(64)   when I **was** in bachelor degree..... so I **was**

This point is very fascinating because the past form of *be* never occurs whenever the preceded word is not *I*, such as the word *it*. The examples are as follow:

(50)   so **it is** very interesting
(58)   so **it is** so different
(102) **it is** very beautiful in Bali

Regarding the production of regular and irregular past verb forms, we assume that she had mastery in producing regular verb forms especially those which are commonly used in daily conversation such as *visited* and *was*. Despite her mastery of regular past verb form, she did not mark some verbs, such as *enjoy, join, study* and even *past form of third person singular be (was)* (see Table 3). We assume that this happened not because she did not know the marked form, but because their positions were not in the beginning of sentences.

For a further discussion of regular verb form, it is also interesting to see how she corrected her own verb form in line 99 below:

(99) Yes I- I **visit** Bali - I **visited** Bali. Yes

It seems she spontaneously corrected the verb *visit* because she realized that the question which is in line 95 required past tense and she had not marked any of her answer in past tense. She had a full control of her utterances in this case.

In relation to irregular past form, we can say that she had not mastered this form well since there is only one evidence on her learner language that she could produce it, that is the word '*came*'. Other irregular forms on her language are incorrect (see Table 4).

This learner language might result from transfer of training. Indonesian has no past tense marker and conveys past through the context or with adverb of time. Furthermore, Indonesian people find it difficult to pronounce the final consonant sounds required for English regular past forms. Therefore, there is a possibility that the learner does not recognize the regular past forms since she rarely heard correct regular forms during her study of English at school. There is also another possibility that she knew the forms but since she could not pronounce the final consonant sound clearly, people may hear her correct regular past forms as present forms.

The errors might also be a result from her communication strategies. She probably experienced that when she had to think about the past verb forms when she wanted to talk about past activities and occurrence, she could not communicate effectively. Therefore, she only marked the past tense sentences by marking the first verbs only.

2. Plural form and quantifiers

The explanation of errors in both plural forms and quantifiers is combined because these two points are related to each other in describing the underlying pattern of the learner language.

The use of plural forms in the learner language is quite limited. The learner, however, showed her principal rules for this form. The learner was able to construct correct plural forms with quantifier *'number' (two, three)* as in the following sentences:

(6)   **three months** (#) almost **four months**
(30) I will be here for **two years**

The learner was aware that quantifier *'many'* is followed by plural noun. It can be seen in the following sentences:

(66) read **many books**
(67) **many discussions**
(81) **many** of my **lecturers**

There is, however, an exception for this language pattern in plural form and quantifier which is in line 43:

(43) there are **many experience** in senior high school

In the sentence above, she employed a singular noun *'experience'* although it is preceded by the quantifier *'many'.* We think that it is only slip of tongue. In addition, we cannot claim that this particular error indicates her lack understanding in the use of *'many'* since there is no further evidence that support it.

Another feature found in this learner language is the inconsistency in the use of plural noun when she employs quantifier *'some'.*

(49) I ee win **some competitions** in Red Cross
(94) the facility in **some tourism spot** is not – is not good yeah

From the two sentences above, she used same quantifier *'some'* but she combined it with different kind of noun. In line 49 she correctly joined *'some'* with plural noun *'competitions'*. In contrast, she put singular noun *'tourism spot'* in line 99. We think that she knew that *'some'* should be followed by plural nouns, but because the noun consisted of two words *'tourism* and *spot'* she forgot to add the ending *'s'* to show plurality. Compared with other plural nouns occurred in her utterances, they are all single words (*competitions, books, discussions,* and *lecturers*) and not compound word like *'tourism spot'.*

Regarding the use of countable and uncountable nouns and their quantifiers, we assume that she did not have mastery in this area. She tended to generalise all noun as countable noun. Therefore, she did not realise that the word *'garbage'* in line 24 is uncountable noun and she used quantifier *'many'* instead of *'much'* to indicate a large number in quantity.

(24) there are many (#) **many garbage** (#) on the street you know

In this learner language, she did not fully understand the distinction between countable and uncountable noun. In addition, she did not master the types and use of quantifiers for each kind of noun

above. Therefore, she decided to generalise all noun as countable and to use quantifiers *'many'* and *'some'* in her speech.

3. Subject-Verb Agreement

Apart from her partial command in marking verb and be in past tense, the learner had incomplete understanding in choosing appropriate auxiliaries (verb and be) which suited their subjects. The basic pattern of subject-verb agreement in her learner language is a tendency to use infinitive verb for all subjects in her utterances.

(17) **Australia have** high technology
(35) **I teach** in university
(58) **I enjoy** my senior high school

Because of her subject-verb assumption, she was able to produce grammatically accurate sentences with subject *'I'* and *'they'* (I/they + infinitive). She also used infinitive for another subject which in turn made the sentence grammatically incorrect.

(17) So also I think that **Australia have** high technology
(82) **they study** in Monash university

Line 17 demonstrates that the learner used infinitive for different subjects (*I* and *Australia*). The first use is correct, but the second one is incorrect because the second subject requires third singular verb. Unfortunately, there is no other evidence in the learner language regarding this feature.

Another appealing characteristic found in the learner language is the use of third singular form of *'be'* for most singular and plural subjects.

(4)   **this is** my first time
(50) **it is** very interesting for me
(56) **the subjects is** difficult
(57) **my friends is** also serious
(64) **the lecturer is** so dominant
(73) **lecturers** in Indonesia **is** also good
(85) **the public transportation is** easy
(103) **people is** right

The sentences in line 64 and 73 support our claim about the use of third singular *'be'*. We believe that although the learner was able to put correct auxiliary for the subject *'the lecturer'* (line 64), it does not mean that she was aware that the subject needs that form of be. The sentence is correct simply because she used singular subject instead of plural subject as in line 73.

However, there is an exception for this feature. The learner could correctly use auxiliary *'am'* for subject *'I'* and auxiliary *'are'* for subject *'they'*.

(55) **I am** more serious
(73) **they are** better
(74) they are ee **they are** smart

Regarding the use of auxiliary *'are'*, there is a tendency that she combined the word *'there'* with auxiliary *'are'* whenever they were followed by quantifier *'many'*. Nevertheless, her sentences containing this feature were somewhat incorrect as in the following remarks:

(24) **there are many** (#) many garbage
(42) **there are many** experience

The reason why this learner could use appropriate auxiliaries for certain subjects might be due to the false concept hypothesized by the learner herself. She overgeneralised the use of auxiliaries (verb infinitive and third singular be) for most subjects (both singular and plural). Moreover, her correct production of *'this is, it is, they are,* and *I am,* we believe, was influenced by her transfer of learning. In Indonesia, students learn grammar including pattern such as basic subject-verb agreement through memorization.

SUMMARY

The present interlanguage study reveals that there are four major errors areas in the learner language, namely past tense, plural form *'s'*, quantifiers, and subject-verb agreement. The learner's errors might be due to the interference of the learner's first language, intralingual factors such as overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules in target language, and failure in comprehending the whole rules. In addition, the errors could be evidence of transfer of training, strategies of L2 learning which enable the learner to communicate effectively during the conversation, and the learner's communication strategies.

Despite limitations in the analysis of the data, underlying patterns in the learner language in each errors area have been identified and described in detail. For future researchers, it is suggested to conduct further studies which involve more participants in a group interview setting in order to get a variety of data, so the error analysis can be conducted and interpreted more comprehensively.

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