

## THE INTERFERENCE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE ON ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: March 2020 Revised: March 2020 Published: April 2020	<i>Language transfer means the application of knowledge and understanding of a source language on a target language. Dissimilarities between the source language and the target language could result in a negative transfer. This essay aims to investigate the interference of Indonesian language on English second language writing regarding the order of noun phrase constituents, number marking, and verb tenses. The results presented in this essay were based on three elicitation tasks that were answered by 20 Indonesian students who studied English at a senior high school in Sumbawa Regency, Indonesia. Their ages were between 15 to 18 years old. The participants were given a test that consisted of three elicitation tasks focusing on sentence writing. The results showed that the negative transfer was still found in the students' writing. However, the students may make mistakes since they had a lack of knowledge, or because they were unable to apply what they knew in their writing.</i>
<b>Keywords</b> Language transfer; Interference; Second language;	
<b>How to cite:</b> Iman, T. R. (2020). The interference of Indonesian language on English second language writing. <i>JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching</i> , 8(2), 170-182 DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v%vi%i.2466">https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v%vi%i.2466</a>	

### INTRODUCTION

Considering English as an international language, it is naturally a great advantage for non-native speakers to learn it. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject and is studied by Indonesian students at school from age 12 until the university level. Indonesian language, the official language of Indonesia, differs from English in several respects in terms of grammar, such as in the order of noun phrase constituents, number marking, and verb tenses. Because of the discrepancies between Indonesian and English, Indonesian students tend to experience problems in learning English. They tend to apply Indonesian grammatical rules in writing English. This phenomenon is called language transfer (Odlin, 1989).

Many previous studies have been conducted in the domain of L1 Indonesian interference on L2 English writing. For example, Irmalia (2016) who investigated the interference in terms of article, genitive, determiner, verb tense, word order, number, and passive voice. In her study, Irmalia did not specify what kind of word order she wanted to investigate. Also, in investigating the number marking and verb tenses, she did not provide any detailed examples of what the students wrote. In this study, the author investigated the order of constituents in noun phrases and provided a more detailed picture of number marking and verb tenses.

This study aimed to investigate the interference of Indonesian language on English writing with special emphasis on the order of constituents of noun phrases, number marking, and verb tenses. For this purpose, the author addressed the following research question, "How does Indonesian interfere with English writing in terms of the order of noun phrases constituent, number marking, and verb tenses?"

Indonesian is the official language of the Republic of Indonesia. It was declared in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia article 36 that "the national language shall be Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia)" (Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence, 1945).

As an official language, Sneddon, Adelaar, Djenar, and Ewing (2010) state that Indonesian is the language used in governmental business settings, newspapers, radio, and television. Furthermore, they state that Indonesian is also used in educational settings like the language of instruction in all Indonesian schools. Additionally, they say that Indonesian is a communication tool in situations where two Indonesians with different regional backgrounds want to communicate with each other. In other words, Indonesian also functions as a *lingua franca* in Indonesia.

Fahrurrozi and Wicaksono (2016) and Wolff, Oetomo, and Fietkiewicz (1984) note that, historically, Indonesian is based on the Malay language. Wolff et al. (1984) point out that Malay is the language used as the *lingua franca* of trade, commerce, and inter-area relations in Malay regions. Malay itself, according to Worsley (1994), belongs to the Austronesian language family and the Western Austronesian subgroup. The Malay language has a long history of language contact and external influence. Colonization played a major role in the development of this language. In Indonesia, the language was influenced by Dutch, while in other Malay-speaking countries, for example, Malaysia, the influences came from English.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

Ellis (1977) states that the basic concept of SLA is how a human being acquires a second language. According to him, the term ‘second’ can refer to any language that is acquired in addition to a first language. Therefore, it can be a third or a fourth language. The first language is also not an unproblematic term, since a person can have more than one first language, and some ‘second’ languages are first languages.

According to Nababan (1991), the majority of the Indonesian population (88%) has acquired a local language as their first language, and they have acquired Indonesian later on, either formally in primary school or informally from the community. By looking at the definition of ‘second’ proposed by Ellis (1977), Indonesian could be considered as a second language for a large part of the Indonesian population.

In contrast, Indonesian students begin to learn English at the age of 12, according to the National Education Standards Agency of Republic Indonesia (2016). Although English is acquired after the local language and Indonesian, English is still considered to be a second language, since, according to Ellis (1997), a second language is any language that is acquired in addition to the person’s first language.

Even if Indonesian is to be regarded as a second language for a large part of the population, it can be argued that its status nevertheless differs from that of English. According to Kushartanti, Velde, and Everaert (2010), Indonesian children start their acquisition of Indonesian at an early age and often in a natural setting, for example at home and in kindergarten. Therefore, when they start to learn English, they are already proficient in Indonesian. Moreover, Indonesian is also the medium of instruction in most Indonesian schools, including English classes. Also, the fact that when the children learn English, it is always through Indonesian and not through their first language. Due to the relatively high level of Indonesian proficiency, it is reasonable to assume that Indonesian will affect the acquisition of English.

In terms of chronology, the first language of the participants in this study is their local language, Sumbawanese. Indonesian is acquired after the acquisition of the local language. Then, at age 12 years old or at junior high school, the participants of the study start to acquire English. Therefore, the order of the participants’ acquisition of language is the local language (Sumbawanese), Indonesian, and English.

### **Language Transfer**

The notion of language transfer has become an influential issue in Second Language Acquisition. Lado (1957) provides one of the earliest definitions of language transfer:

“Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture- both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives” (as cited in Gass and Selinker, 1992, p. 1).

However, Odlin (1989) states “transfer is not always native language influence” (p. 27). According to him, when individuals have proficiency in two languages, knowledge of both languages may affect the acquisition of a subsequent language. This is also the case when individuals know three or more languages, which leads to three and or more sources of interference. Odlin also states that it is difficult to pinpoint the sources of influence in such multilingual situations.

The participants of this study all spoke Sumbawanese (a local language spoken on the Sumbawa) and Indonesian before starting to learn English. Although there may be interference from Sumbawanese, this essay only focuses on the influence of Indonesian. The author decided to only focus on the interference from Indonesian because of several reasons, for example, the early age at which children in Indonesia acquire Indonesian, the fact that Indonesian is the language of instruction at school, and the fact that Indonesian children always learn English through Indonesian and not through their first language. Thus, the transfer is likely to also come from Indonesian.

Odlin (1989) defines transfer as “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (p. 27). He further explains that the effects of cross-linguistic similarities and differences can result in two kinds of transfer, namely positive and negative transfer. The former can facilitate the acquisition of a new language. An example of this could be the SVO basic word order of Indonesian, for instance, *Ayah menendang bola*, which can be translated into *Father kicks the ball*. The latter may hinder the acquisition of a new language.

Odlin (1989) also states that negative transfer results in the production of errors, such as substitutions and calques. Substitution means that the form of the native language is applied in the target language. An example of this would be the use of the Swedish word *bort* ‘away’ in an English sentence written by a native speaker of Swedish: “*Now I live home with my parents. But sometimes I must go bort*” (Odlin, 1989, p. 37). Calque refers to a literal translation from the native language to the target language, as in the example noted by Fantini (1985) below. This sentence is uttered by a Spanish-English bilingual child.

(1) Let’s quickly put the fire out

‘Vamos rápido a poner el fuego afuera’

In the example above, the student translated the English expression ‘the fire out’ using a literal translation. The Spanish correct translation as *extinguir el fuego* (as referred in Odlin, 1989, p. 37). Odlin (1989) further mentions that several other factors lead to the occurrence of transfer, including motivation, class size and individual variation. Highly motivated learners are more likely to reach a higher proficiency in the target language (Haerazi et al., 2020). High proficiency correlates to lower levels of the transfer. Class size may have an important effect on transfer. Students in a smaller class receive more attention than students in a bigger class (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Thus, learners in a smaller class may reach a higher proficiency in the target language than learners in a big class. Concerning individual variation, the personality of the learners and their proficiency will also affect the occurrence of the transfer. Less proficient learners will rely more on their knowledge of previously acquired languages. Therefore, this may lead to the occurrence of more negative transfer.

### Contrastive analysis between Indonesian and English

The study of transfer requires a contrastive analysis of the relevant languages. In this study, the dissimilarities between Indonesia and English in terms of noun phrases, number marking, and the way they express present and past time are explained. Concerning the former, a noun phrase consists of “a noun serving as headword and (possibly) various accompanying dependents” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2005, p. 82). In this essay, the focus is only on the elements that precede the head noun, that is, demonstrative determiners, possessive determiners, and pre-modifiers, as this is where English differs from Bahasa Indonesia. In English, the demonstrative determiners, possessive determiners, and pre-modifiers precede the head noun. In Indonesian, on the other hand, according to Djenar (2003), the head noun typically appears before the demonstrative, possessive, and adjective.

The number is the “term for the contrast between singular and plural” (Leech, Conrad, and Biber, 2002, p. 78). In English, only countable nouns distinguish between singular and plural. The singular is the base form of the noun, while the plural is in most cases formed by adding *-s/es* to the stem. In Indonesian, on the other hand, plurality is neither indicated by a suffix nor a change in the stem. Instead, nouns are reduplicated to indicate plurality (Sneddon, 1966). According to orthographic conventions, a hyphen is added between the root and its reduplication.

Tense is a “grammatical category referring to the time of the situation; the tense is indicated by the form of the verb” (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2016, p. 87). English has two simple tenses, namely present and past tense. Present time is represented by the simple verb form and past tense is represented by the stem and the inflection *-ed* for a regular verb. In English, the present tense mostly deals with the present time (Leech et al. 2002). Moreover, Leech et al. (2002) also explain some other uses of simple present tense form, such as describing a state that exist at the present time, for example, referring to habitual action, describing an action that is happening at the present time, for example, *Here comes you mother*, and indicating past or future time.

English also has aspect. There are two kinds of aspects: the perfect and the progressive aspect (present and past progressive). In this present study, the author only focuses on the present progressive aspect. The present progressive aspect has three major functions (Leech, 1987). The three main functions consist of indicating duration, indicating a limited duration and indicating a need to finish the action encoded by the verb. Progressive aspect is formed by adding the suffix *-ing*, and it is preceded by the auxiliary verb *be*. This study is also concerned with subject-verb agreement. The third-person singular subject (*he*, *she*, and *it*) triggers the suffix *-s* or *-es* on the verb. The first person singular (*I*), second-person singular/plural (*you*), and first and third person plural (*we* and *they*, respectively) trigger no overt agreement on finite verbs. Past tense is marked by a specific inflectional form of the verb. According to Huddleston and Pullum (2005), this inflection is called the *preterite*. For example, the preterite form of the verb *walk* is *walked*. According to Leech et al. (2002), past tense is “most often used to refer to past time” (p. 151) and when a speaker says *He walked home* it is indicated that he is referring to some time in the past. However, the preterite does not always denote the past. Leech (1987) explains that there are two other uses of the past tense, namely expressing hypothetical meaning and referring to the present.

Indonesian, on the other hand, does not have morphological tense, meaning that Indonesian does not employ any verb to distinguish between present and past time. The distinction between present and past is made entirely using a time adverbial. Therefore, when a time adverbial is not inserted, the time frame of the sentence can be vague. To indicate that an event is in progress in Indonesian, the adverbial aspect markers *sedang*, *tengah*, and *lagi* are added (Prasetyanto, 2015). Unlike English, Indonesian does not require overt morphological markers on the verb. Indonesian lacks subject agreement on the verb.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study is categorized as qualitative research. According to Kumar (2011), the main focus of qualitative research is understanding, explaining, exploring, discovering, and clarifying situations, feelings, perceptions, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people. In this study, the author worked with the non-numerical data and interpreted the meaning of the data.

### **Research Instruments**

The data were compiled by using a test. All participants were asked to complete the three elicitation tasks. Task 1 consisted of describing a holiday, Task 2 consisted of describing a sequence of pictures, and Task 3 consisted of translating sentences from Indonesian to English. The time spent in completing the tasks was 40 minutes.

### **Research Subject**

Twenty Indonesian students who study English at a senior high school in Sumbawa, Indonesia, participated in the study. The students were boys and girls, and they were between 15 and 18 years old. The participants stated that their first language is Sumbawanese (Bahasa Sumbawa). Indonesian is their second language, which they acquired at an early age and in a natural setting. Also, Indonesian is also the language that they use in school. When the students participated in the study, they had already learned English for three years when they were in junior high school. As a result, they had some knowledge and background in learning English, and at this stage, they were able to compose sentences in English.

A convenience sampling method was applied in the study. According to Podesva and Sharma (2013), inconvenience sampling the researcher chooses participants based on the fact that they are willing and available to be studied. Although this study used a convenience sampling, to the author's knowledge (based on the Indonesian educational system), the subjects of the test were the typical and representative students in Sumbawa, Indonesia. To find the participants of the present study, the author contacted the headmaster of a high school in Sumbawa. Then, the author asked his permission to conduct a study at the school. After receiving permission, the author asked the 20 students to participate in the study. the author also told the students that to protect the anonymity, the author would not be mentioned their names and the name of the school in the published version of this paper.

### **Data Analysis**

After having obtained the data, the author analyzed it using the step suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). According to them, there are three stages when doing qualitative analysis; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Regarding the former, the author started with reading all of the students' answers to get a general idea of the possible interference of Indonesian in their English writing. Next, in order to make it easier to compare the students' answers, the author sorted the answers into the following four categories: the order of constituents in noun phrases; number marking; present tense forms: a simple form, progressive form, and subject-verb agreement; and simple past tense form. The group of noun phrases was divided into three subcategories: nouns with demonstratives, nouns with possessives and nouns with adjectives. When it comes to data display, the author displayed the data in tables. With regard to the conclusion, the author looked in detail at each of the categories to investigate where the rules of English were followed and where they were not. The sentences that were considered not to follow the rules of English were further investigated in order to identify whether the sentences were constructed using Indonesian grammatical rules or using rules neither from English nor Indonesian. Finally, to make sure the data is valid the author verified all the students' written work by reading it.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

#### Results from Task 1

This section presents the results for which verb forms the students used in a context where we would most naturally expect past tense form. Twenty participants were asked to describe what they did on their last holiday in six sentences. The number of expected sentences from all the participants was thus 120 sentences. However, there were only 63 sentences produced by the 20 students. This is due to the fact that not all of the students wrote six sentences. These 63 sentences were sorted into four different categories. Further details about these categories are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1  
The Results for Task 1; Past Tense

Category	Example	Number of sentence
containing the past tense form of a verb	<b>I climbed</b> after we continue journey	2
using the Indonesian grammatical structure, where a past time adverbial is combined with the base form of a verb	<b>Last week I go</b> to field together my mother	22
The sentences were written using the base form of the verb	<b>I go</b> to Sumbawa	32
The sentences were written with an adverbial that can denote both present, past and future time and the base form of a verb	<b>Sunday I go</b> to field together my mother to harvest rice	7

#### Results from Task 2

As was explained that describing a sequence of pictures allowed the participants to use the present tense forms (simple form and progressive form) as well as subject-verb agreement. The students were asked to describe what the man in the pictures is doing. The total number of sentences expected in this task was 120 sentences. However, the data only had 106 sentences. This is because not all of the participants described all six pictures. These 106 sentences were sorted into five different categories. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2  
The Results for Task 2: Present Tense Forms and Subject-verb Agreement

Category	Example	Number of sentence
The sentences were written using the base form of the verb to express habitual activity in accordance with English grammatical convention	<b>He get up</b> at 7:00	57
The sentences were written using the base form of the verb with the additional suffix <i>-ing</i> added to the noun, but the sentences lacked an auxiliary and therefore also lacked subject-verb agreement.	<b>He take bathing</b>	8
The sentences were written without a subject or a verb, or without subject and verb	He breakfast	20
The sentences contained the progressive form of the verb without an auxiliary verb	<b>He eating</b>	19
The sentences were written in correct subject-verb agreement in accordance with English grammar in terms of subject-verb agreement, but with the second person pronoun instead of the expected third person pronoun	<b>You brush</b> teeth	2

### Results from Task 3

As was explained that the translating task was designed to obtain information about the order of constituents in noun phrases and plural forms of nouns. This task consisted of eight sentences in Indonesian that the participants were asked to translate into English.

### Results for the order of constituents in noun phrases

As was mentioned above, the students translated eight sentences from Indonesian to English. Six out of eight sentences in the task concerned the order of constituents in noun phrases. The six sentences were divided into three categories: Four sentences contained a noun with a demonstrative, one sentence contained a noun with a possessive, and, finally, one sentence contained a noun with an adjective. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3  
The Result for the order of constituents in noun phrases

Category	Example	Number of sentence
The sentences contained a noun with a demonstrative according to the rules of English grammar	<b>That house</b> very beautiful	5
The sentences were written in the correct word order according to English grammar rules, but the agreement inside of the noun phrases was incorrect	<b>That cars</b> is product cina	4
The sentences were written in the correct word order according to English grammar rules, but both the demonstrative and the noun were misspellt	<b>Thet car's</b> this is product cina	9
The sentences were written using Indonesian grammar rule	<b>Car that</b> is product Cina	22
The sentences used the personal pronoun 'it' instead of a demonstrative pronoun	Help off <b>lamp it</b>	13
The sentences were written by omitting the demonstrative pronoun	Pen in there is on table Help turn off lamp	24

One of the six sentences contained a noun with a possessive pronoun. Therefore, the number of expected answers was 20 sentences. However, only 19 sentences were obtained in this type of noun phrase. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4  
The results for the order of a noun with a possessive pronoun

Category	Example	Number of sentence
The sentences were written using Indonesian grammar rules	I need <b>book math your</b>	15
The sentences showed a misplacement of the genitive in relation to the head noun	I need book's <b>your math.</b>	2
The sentences indicated wrong place of the attributive noun	I need your books <b>math.</b>	2

One out of six sentences should be written with a noun being modified by an adjective. All the participants wrote the sentences in this exercise. Thus, there were 20 sentences altogether. The representative sentences are given in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5  
The Results for the Order of a Noun Being Modified by an Adjective

Category	Example	Number of sentence
The sentences were written with the noun and the adjective in the correct order according to English grammar rules, but with incorrect possessive pronoun and the placement thereof	Favorite songs <b>me</b> new.	2
The sentences were written using Indonesian grammar rules.	<b>Song favorite my new</b>	17
The head noun was placed before the pre-modifier	<b>Song</b> new my favorite.	2

**Results for number**

The data for the plural forms of nouns were derived from five of the eight sentences translated in the translating task. Thus, from the 20 students, 100 sentences were expected. However, 95 sentences were obtained, since not all students translated all of the sentences. The presentation of the results is presented in Table 6 as follows.

Table 6  
The Results for Number

Category	Example	Number of sentence
sentences were written using the correct English plural forms, but all of them displayed in number between noun and demonstrative	Please turn of that <b>lamps</b> That <b>cars</b> is product cina	8
sentences were written using Indonesian grammar rules	<b>Car-car</b> it and made cina I need <b>book-book</b> math you	4
sentences expressed the plural marking of the noun, without any overt morphological marking.	I need <b>book math you</b> <b>Song favorite new me</b>	74
sentences used an apostrophe with an s to mark the plural forms of nouns	I need <b>book's your math</b> <b>Song's</b> new my favorite	9

**Discussion**

**Task 1**

The results from the first task show that 22 out of 63 sentences indicate negative transfer from Indonesian. The sentences were written using the base form of the verb and combining it with an adverbial indicating past time, for example, *Last week I go to Sumbawa*. This is a typical way to express a past event in Indonesian. Sentences simply using the base form of the verb to encode past tense were also found in the data, for instance, *I buy bag in Sumbawa*. In this case, the students omitted the inflectional morpheme that would otherwise be attached to the verb. Thirty-six out of the 63 sentences were produced using this pattern. It was the most common sentence-pattern found in the data. These results indicate that when the students are unsure of which rule to apply, they tend to use the base form of the verb or they are not familiar with the rules of English in regard to the past form. These findings are in line

with Syahid and Hadi (2018) who state English learners tends to fail using subject-agreement in the form of verbs.

However, the participants also produced past forms that were in accordance with English grammar rules, but in a very small number. Only two such sentences were found in the data, for instance *In journey, I looked guava tree*. In conclusion, it seems that the students' problems are not only about the transfer because the production of sentences according to Indonesian rules is less than a half of the total sentences, while in the other half, but the sentences also do not display the correctly inflected English forms either. They produced mistakes because they were not familiar with or unsure of the past form of the verb in English. However, evidence of transfer did occur in the data, thus corroborating Lado's (1957) idea of transfer, which states that the learner of a second language tends to apply the rules of their L1. Even though the transfer observed here is not strictly from the participants' L1, this illustrates transfer from one L2 to another L2.

These findings may help language teachers and learners. English foreign language teachers in Indonesia can develop new ways for English teaching, for instance, by demonstrating to the students the differences between Indonesian and English regarding their grammatical constructions (Haerazi, Vikasari, & Prayati, 2019). Also, teachers can improve students' grammatical knowledge. Moreover, by enabling students to become more aware of problems rooted in transfer, both their grammar and writing skills can be improved. Also, the results of the present study corroborate the previous study, for instance, a study conducted by Irmalia (2016) that found the most interference mistake made by the participants of her study in their English writing was incorrect verb tense.

## Task 2

Fifty-seven out of 106 sentences demonstrate a lack of subject-verb agreement. This can be analyzed as a negative transfer from Indonesian. However, this can also be the case that the participants simply used the base form of the verb when they were unsure of which rules to apply. The results indicate that the students have great difficulty with subject-verb agreement. Using the base form of the verb, in this case, describes the event as a habitual activity, according to the function of the present tense in English.

Nineteen out of the 106 sentences illustrate an attempt to apply the English grammar rules by adding the suffix *-ing* to the verb to encode the progressive aspect, for example, *He eating*. However, the participant omitted the auxiliary verb *is*. This omission may demonstrate that the participants are not familiar with English grammar rules regarding the use of auxiliary verbs before the verb in the *-ing* form. The data also revealed that some of the participants were not able to produce a full sentence. It is in line with Haerazi and Irawan (2020b) who state writing skills are uneasy for students who learn English as a foreign language. Based on this result, twenty out of the 106 sentences were not complete sentences. The participants omitted the subject, verb, or both subject and verb, for example, *He breakfast*, *Take shower*, and *Next, dress up long shirt*. This finding is somewhat surprising because I assumed that students at this level would be able to correctly construct a sentence. It is in keeping with Muhayyah (2018) who states that students' speaking and writing skills in English are influenced by linguistic knowledge such as grammatical competence.

To sum up, it is difficult to make assumptions that using the base form of the verb can be categorized as a negative transfer from Indonesian since it could be the case that the students do not know the relevant English grammar rule. Instead, they just use the base form of the verb. Therefore, these findings could have important pedagogical implications. English teachers need to provide more accurate feedback, for example, demonstrating the difference between Indonesian and English in regard to grammatical constructions, to help students correct their mistakes and improve their English proficiency. This finding is reinforced by

### Task 3

#### Discussion on the order of constituents in noun phrases

Three different kinds of noun phrases are discussed here, namely noun phrases containing a demonstrative, one containing a possessor, and one containing an adjective.

Twenty-two out of 77 sentences containing a noun phrase with a determiner showed evidence of transfer from Indonesian. The participants wrote the sentences by placing the head noun before the determiner, for example, *House that is very beautiful*. As stated by Odlin (1989), a negative transfer can result in production errors. In this case, the error can be categorized as a calque, by which is meant a literal translation from Indonesian. The current study also found that the students were not able to translate the demonstrative pronouns into the target language. It may be that the students lack the relevant vocabulary. Often, demonstrative pronouns were simply omitted from the sentence, for instance, *House is very beautiful*. There were 24 sentences like this, and it was the most common type of mistake.

Thirteen sentences were written using the personal pronoun *it* instead of the demonstrative pronoun, for example, *House it beautiful*. It may indicate that there is an incorrect translation of the Indonesian demonstrative pronoun. Thus, this may be seen as a kind of negative transfer as the pronoun *it* is positioned after the head noun. Another fact that the author found in the study shows that four sentences were written using the correct order according to English grammar rule, but the demonstratives did not agree with the number, for example, *That cars is product Cina*. This might be evidence of negative transfer from Indonesian since Indonesian demonstratives can be used both for singular and for plural.

The misspelling of the demonstrative, for example, *thet* in *Thet house is beautiful*, or the confusion of using *s*, for example, *Thet pen's is over the table*, are also found in the data. The misspelling of the demonstrative *that* is probably a kind of pronunciation transfer, where the participants wrote in the way they pronounce it. The latter example seems to indicate that the students could not differentiate between genitive *s* and plural *s*. Regarding nouns being modified by possessors, the participants relied heavily on Indonesian grammar rules. In translating the sentence, they placed the possessor after the head noun, for example, *book math your*. Thus, this is an example of a negative transfer from Indonesian. The number of these sentences was 15 out of 19 sentences, making it quite common. This error can be classified as a calque (Odlin 1989).

Regarding nouns being modified by adjectives, the data shows that negative transfer from Indonesian appeared in the participants' writing. The participants placed the adjective after the noun, in accordance with Indonesian grammar rules, for example *Song favorite my new*. The total number of sentences was 16 out of 20 sentences, making it rather common. These errors can likewise be classified as calques. Two sentences had the adjective and the noun in the correct order, but the possessive pronoun was placed in the wrong position, for example *Favorite songs me new*. The two remaining sentences had the adjective at the end of the sentence, for example *Song new my favorite*. Therefore, these results may indicate that the participants have difficulties constructing such phrases.

In summary, half of the sentences of the first category showed evidence of negative transfer. The remaining half of the sentences were not produced according to English grammar rules. Thus, the author cannot claim that the errors observed were simply due to transfer. In the second and the third kind of noun phrase, negative transfer was more common. Therefore, in these two cases, the author can assume that transfer is a major problem for the participants. These findings show that English teachers may need to improve the students' grammatical knowledge by demonstrating how transfer might influence second language production.

### Number marking

Negative transfer from Indonesian was also observed to some degree when the participants were asked to produce the English plural. The participants reduplicated the noun root according to Indonesian grammar rules, for example, *Car-car it made in Cina*. Only four out of 95 sentences were produced according to this pattern. This indicates that the transfer here is not very common.

It seems that the participants were not familiar with the English grammar rules for marking plural on nouns. Seventy-four out of 95 sentences were written using the base form of the noun, for example, *I need book math you*. Furthermore, the participants failed to distinguish between the plural *s* and the possessive *s*. Nine out of 95 sentences failed to make this distinction regarding the plural *s* and the possessive *s*. The participants formed the plural by using the possessive *s*, for instance, *Thet pen 's is over the table*.

To sum up, negative transfer from Indonesian was quite rare in terms of number marking. Thus, it cannot be assumed that the participants failed to construct the plural form due to transfer. It may be they have lack relevant knowledge of the target language. Therefore, these results demonstrate that teachers may need to improve the students' English proficiency in regard to number marking on nouns.

### CONCLUSION

This final section summarises the present study by answering the research question stated in the introduction. The research question is *How does Indonesian interfere with English writing in terms of the order of constituents in noun phrases, number marking, and verb tenses?*

The author begins with the order of constituents in noun phrases. The results of the study suggest that the participants produced sentences according to Indonesian grammar rules, in which the head noun is placed before the modifier. Then, negative transfer from Indonesian for number marking was quite uncommon. Next, regarding the findings related to interference with regards to present tense. The results of the study show a sign of transfer from Indonesian, but it might also be the case that the participants did not understand the relevant English grammar rules. Finally, the author summarises the findings related to the interference of Indonesian with regards to past tense. Negative transfer from Indonesian was not very common for the past tense.

In conclusion, negative transfer from Indonesian was found in the participants writing. However, negative transfer was not the only source of production errors, as some mistakes can be attributed to a lack of knowledge of relevant English grammar rules or unable to apply what they know onto their writing. Therefore, it is very important for English teachers to improve students' English proficiency. The author hopes the results of this study can contribute to improving English education in Indonesia.

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