

# Investigating Indonesian or Javanese Interferences in ELLT: A Case Study at Higher Education Institutions

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This paper examines the Indonesian or Javanese interferences in ELLT. The objective is to investigate types and subtypes of Indonesian or Javanese interferences which arise at State Islamic Institute and PGRI Teacher Training and Education Institute of Tulungagung, East Java, Indonesia, which types and subtypes of them arise most frequently, and to explain why they arise. It was conducted by using a descriptive qualitative analysis in a case study to 265 students and 10 lecturers at the two higher institutions. The research instruments used in the research are fourteen durative texts - containing interferences in lecturers-students interaction-, questionnaires, interviews, and discussions with some experts in related researches. It revealed that (1) grammatical errors happened most frequently (145 times) and 10 subtypes occurred because of very influential knowledge of L1 and L2 into ELLT but the unawareness in using knowledge of L1 and L2 to support the spontaneous situation also contributed; (2) 6 subtypes of semantics occurred because of the speakers' low competence of socio pragmatics; and (3) 5 subtypes of phonology happened because of the different phonological systems of L1, L2, L3, Javanese accent and Indonesian word choices

**Keywords:** Indonesian or Javanese interferences, ELLT, language acquisition

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian communities are commonly bilinguals. They speak (i) dialect, (ii) Indonesian as standard language. Dialects are languages used by groups of societies that stay in certain areas and Javanese is one of the regional dialects. Its structure is related to ethics and politeness in Javanese community in the language perspective, especially in the semiotics one.<sup>1-2</sup> Instead of having mother tongues, namely Javanese for L1 and Indonesian for L2, Indonesian people learn foreign languages and this causes language transfer. In this case, language transfer is also known as L1 interference, linguistic interference, or cross linguistic influence. It is one of the phenomena which arises when the students learn a foreign language and it occurs in any situation when someone does not have a native-level command of a language, as when translating from L1 into L2 or L3 in ELLT.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning with the knowledge applied from one language to another, language data of the learners' brain include at least 5 types, i.e. (i) phonological, (ii) lexical, (iii) grammatical, (iv) semantics, and (v) pragmatics. They influence the learners' knowledge to apply L1 into L2 or foreign language.<sup>4</sup> Each language data may cause any interference.

Grammatical interference includes the introduction of the speech of bilinguals, units and structures of foreign parts of speech, grammatical categories, and function forms. Semantics interference occurs due to familiar phenomena and experience which are classified or structured differently in the other language. Phonological interference affects units and structures of intonation, rhythm, catenation and articulation.<sup>5</sup> It means that the individual learners' language acquisition development and pragmatic feature influence the cause of interference. It is also caused by the fact that native speakers rarely develop explicit knowledge for morphological or syntactical rule in their L1 and L2.<sup>6</sup>

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Many recent studies related to interference in general perspectives were conducted by many experts. They investigate the influence of L1 towards L2 and L3 and the interaction between the languages, culture problems which are influenced by mother tongue interference in L2 acquisition by using ontology approach, the role of L1 acquisition and L2, the similar and different structures of the two languages, the prior knowledge and the ability of learners, the consonant clusters of L1 and L2, theory analysis between the languages, and L1's role and language users' errors in L2 acquisition.<sup>3,7-10</sup>

Most of the studies focus on the general interference of L1 to L2 and L3 and were limited to the description of the problems. They do not deeply investigate the factors causing the interferences. Studies related to ELLT interference are necessary to conduct in order to portray the aspects which need to be reinforced, particularly in line with the communication in ELLT between the students and the lecturers. Data obtained from the spoken language interaction between students and lecturers in ELLT signify that this study found grammatical, phonological, and semantics aspects and the subtypes of each aspect.

## 2. RESEARCH DETAILS

Using a descriptive analytic approach through a case study, ethnography as well as comparison, this study deeply investigates interferences found in ELLT process by means of classroom observation and 14 videos recorded at State Islamic Institute and PGRI Teacher Training and Education Institute of Tulungagung Indonesia.<sup>11</sup> The participants are students ranging from the 1st to 7th semester and 10 lecturers who were randomly selected in purposive sampling. Research instruments include: 1) 14 English learning texts containing interferences in lecturers-students interaction, 2) questionnaires on the use of English in dialogues during the learning process, 3) interviews on perception of interference towards any words, phrases, or clauses used in uttering ideas, concepts, and/or answers during the class, and 4) discussions with some experts in related researches.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The observation found 3 types of Indonesian or Javanese interferences, namely grammatical, phonological, and semantics. In particular, grammatical interference is the most frequently occurs in ELLT with the total number of errors is 145 which can be seen in the figure 1 below.

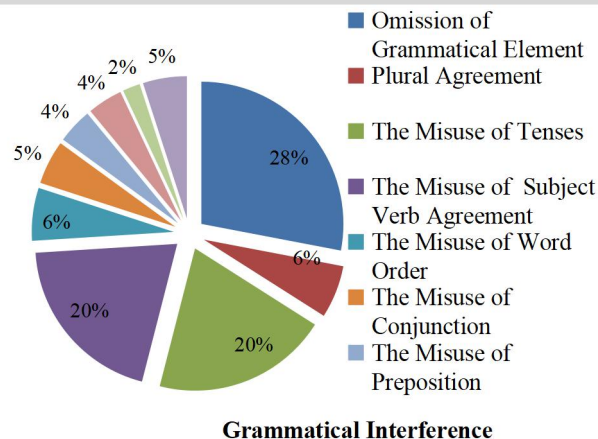


Fig 1. Percentage of Errors Frequency' GI

The numbers of grammatical interferences displayed in the figure above represent 10 subtypes and 145 errors frequency. Table 1 below demonstrates the errors frequency of words, phrases, and clauses performed by the participants in classroom interactions.

The number of words, phrases and clauses displayed in the table above represent the interference subtypes produced by the subjects. However, in order to know the detail of Indonesian or Javanese influences in their sentences, the sentence structures in Indonesian or Javanese must also be studied. In the utterances produced by the subjects, it can be seen that most of the subjects made grammatical interferences by eliminating the grammatical elements (40 times), for example: "If the cultural in Indonesia not change but still kept."<sup>12</sup> They also made errors (9 times) on plural agreement, for example: "Maybe your grandfather can use glass."

Next, it is followed by errors in using tenses (30 times) like in this: "Maybe in graduate Senior High School she go to get married," and the errors in using SVA (30 times) like in this: "the back, are you finish?" Then they are in constructing word order (9 times of errors) like in this: "In school about daily activity every parent there are." Next, the subjects had Indonesian structure's influence in using preposition (6 times) as in the following sentence: "The title in today is young married." It also happened in using conjunction (5 times errors) as in the following sentence: "Because of the taste is very good, I think you are the professional chef not only in Indonesia but in International".

Table 1. Selected Phrase and Sentences in GI

Sub	U	Plur Tens sva wo conj prep pro pv adj														
		GE														
		w	w	w	p	w	w	p	w	p	w	p		s		
1	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	2
2	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1
3	2	1	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	2	
4	1	1	2	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1
5	2	1	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	
6	2	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
7	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
8	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
9	2	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
11	2	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
12	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
13	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
14	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
15	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
16	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
17	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
18	2	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
19	3	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
20	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
21	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
22	2	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
23	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
24	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
		-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
		-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
		-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
		-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		

Then the subjects also got confused when constructing a phrase by using pronoun as object (6 times) as follows: "I agree with they?" instead of "I agree with them?". The subjects also got difficulties in using past participle /ed/ in passive voice (4 times) as in this example: "The last discussion of our authentic assessment and the material will be present by the last group." The last one is the misuse of adjective (7 times): "If I order another motives, is the price same or no?" It indicates that most of the students got confused in constructing sentences by using English structure completely especially Subject-Verb agreement because of the influences of Indonesian structure.

Then the second type of interference is semantic which has 49 errors of frequency. Semantics interferences consist of two main types, namely (a) Denotative meaning which has one subtype (using improper lexicon) and (b) Connotative meaning which has five subtypes. The following table shows the numbers of selected phrases and sentences containing improper lexicon found in the subjects' classroom interactions.

Table 2. Selected Phrases and Sentences Containing Improper Lexicon

No	Subject	Indonesian lexicon		Javanese Lexicon	
		Sentence	Phrase	Sentence	Phrase
1	1	2	2	2	2
2	2	1	2	2	1
3	3	2	1	1	2
4	4	1	1	1	2
5	5	2	1	1	2
6	6	2	1	2	1
7	7	1	1	1	1

It is worth mentioning that Indonesian students have preferences in construing content in English expressions by maintaining L1 or L2 knowledge (Wotler in Fizpatrick & Barfield, 2009). As a result they are confused in using some terms as subject no 1: "once-once," subject 2 says, "doc" which is influenced by Indonesian clipping the pre-initial 'doc-tor', subject 3: "must check up your body to a doctor", instead of saying "should go to a medical laboratory." Similarly, subject no 4: "where you go?" or "where go". This expression is influenced by Javanese dialect: "teko ngendi?" subject 5: "it is not discount, it is pass.", subject 6: "Ya, because the men no prepare yet about his work I think we can say it is young when they cannot get money by themselves." and then subject 7 says: "and finally read not give a speech." This is due to the fact that the subjects (students and lecturers) translate the sentence directly and get difficulties in finding the suitable lexicon.

The next type is Connotative meaning which has five subtypes: (a) improper idioms, (b) improper metaphor, (c) improper slogan or belief, (d) improper compounding, and (e) improper proverb. The following table shows numbers of selected phrases containing improper idioms, metaphors, slogans, compounding and proverbs that were used in the subjects' classroom interactions.

The analysis shows that lecturer no 1 had been influenced in the structure of L1 and L2 and did the direct translation to find the suitable idiom to express his idea spontaneously: "the most important thing in this case is not important if your Idea better or not, but just say something."

Table 3. Selected Phrases and Sentences Containing Improper Lexicon

Subj	Idiom	Metaphor	Belief & Compo Proverb Slog					
			S	P	S	Phrase		
1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
3	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
4	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
5	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
6	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
7	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-

Instead of using L1 or L2 structure, student no. 1 also got confused in choosing the suitable idiom to express his idea while student no. 2 got difficulties to find the suitable idiom to express short gun married: "Ya, young married is..good idea, and of course... better than LKMD."

Secondly, using improper metaphor indicates that the lecturers were influenced by their culture, local knowledge or texts particularly in revealing Javanese cultural values and local knowledge. Lecturer no. 4 tried to say a simile, "Perfume, eh, compliment is like perfume" but she does not use completely. Lecturer no.3 used irony to convince the students whether they understood or not and it made her happy: "I'm happy to hear it.. Even though you are really understand or no, Left-handed compliment." What she said or done and what she actually meant are different. Therefore, she employed to criticize her students by ridiculing them.<sup>13</sup>

Thirdly, the following are students' slogans no. 1, 2, and 3: "Ya, the teenager in my village usual get married in the young"; Javanese belief of student no. 1: "Ya, because the girls don't think about work, Kanca wingking"; Javanese belief of student no. 2: "Young married like the people have an urgent need to get married". These sentences are used to express their idea and were influenced by L1 structure or Javanese Tri Brata.

Fourthly, lecturer no. 2 got confused in expressing her ideas and was influenced by L2 structure like: "We don't have direct class." and "I mean me and you not in the classroom." Such matter happened also when student no. 1 expressed her feeling to her lover.

Fifthly, lecturer no. 9 got influenced of L2 structure when expressing his idea in a paraphrase which should be "Once bitten twice shy" and it indicates that "mark my words" is an expression used to lend an air of seriousness to what the speaker is about to say.

Next, the third type of interference is phonological which has 23 errors of frequency in ELLT at State Islamic Institute and PGRI Teacher Training and Education Institute of Tulungagung. Phonological interference has five subtypes including (a) pronunciation trill of post vocalic /r/, (b) vowel conflation with diphthong and consonant, (c) mispronunciation of consonant of /k/ into /g/, (d) mispronunciation of alveolar sound: minimal pair/s/ ~/z/, (e) mispronunciation sibilant consonant of /s/ into // and misspelling of adopted words and the conflation of /a/ into /æ/. The following table shows the numbers of selected words containing phonological interference produced by subjects in classroom interaction.

Table 4. Selected Phrases and Sentences Containing Improper Lexicon

N	Sub	Javanese pronunciation				
		Indonesian	Voc	MinPairs	/k/~g/	s/~j/
0		conflation				
1	1	2	1	1	1	-
2	2	2	1	-	1	-
3	3	2	-	-	-	1
4	4	1	-	-	-	-
5	5	2	-	-	-	-
6	6	2	-	-	-	-
7	7	1	-	-	-	-

Firstly, the students tend to pronounce post vocalic clearly as /argument/ and /perfume/. It is a rolled alveolar sound with a pronounced trill as post- vocalic /r/. Those who master two languages have their own L1 phonological system which influences each other in order to bridge up the English acquisition. It arises because there is no rule whether the alveolar sound /r/ is pronounced clearly. The alveolar sound is commonly pronounced clearly in Indonesian phonological system especially by Javanese people whose accent influences their pronunciation strongly.

Secondly, they mispronounce diphthong /əʊ/ with /o/, phoneme /f/ with /p/; they do confluations of /a/ with /ə/ in Fobia~phobia, /aɪ/ with /'i/, vowel /ʌ/ with /au/, and of diphthong /aɪ/ with /'i/ in /sains/~since~/sims/.

Thirdly, they got difficulties to differentiate the pronunciations of consonant /k/ with /g/ as "doc" instead of "dog" in /dɒktər/ which is pronounced shorter by using pre-initial /dɑ:k/; they could not differentiate the pronunciations of /d/ with /k/. This is influenced by Javanese accent. Then they also found difficulties in differentiating the alveolar sound as minimal pair of /s/ into /z/ in the word "present"~ "presence". It happened also in the conflation of consonant /s/ into /z/, as they pronounce present as /prezent/ and presence as /preznz/.

The last one, they also got confused in pronouncing alveolar fricatives or sibilant consonant such as // which may be pronounced as /s/ like in /kæi(r)/ which is pronounced as /kasir/ or /cassier/ for Indonesian words are usually spelt the way they pronounced. Thus English words, in which the spelling does not match the pronunciation, can cause problems.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research found that of the types of Indonesian or Javanese interferences, grammatical interference can be considered to be the most dominant. This implies that L1 knowledge into ELLT is very influential. However, both aspects, the knowledge of Javanese (L1) and of Indonesian (L2), are not the absolute factors.

It may also be influenced by the unawareness of using knowledge of Javanese (L1) or Indonesian (L2) by supporting the spontaneous situation. The subjects also got influenced by Indonesian word choice, the local knowledge, particularly in revealing Javanese cultural values, and the low competence of socio pragmatics.

Therefore, lecturers and students in both higher institutions viewed the acquisition development of ELLT, which is influenced by Indonesian and Javanese knowledge and competence, to organize the English knowledge. As emphasized by many assumptions, L2 speakers, after puberty, tend to speak with his accent of L1 because L1 limits L2 production. Corresponding to that notion, studies by some researchers indicate that the differences in phonological systems of the two languages seem to be relevant factors and influences of the strange accent.<sup>14</sup>

To obtain the good policy toward lecturers, linguists and the decision makers should develop and improve the English language acquisition in order to direct its research to the condition and situation which create contextual teaching model, exploring their language competence and communicate in the lingual situation, and have native speakers as partners so that they can interact naturally. By conducting the lingual level research which focuses on interference types, that finds the factors causing interferences, it is expected to fill the empty space of research to improve the ELLT with the given material based on psychological condition and the supporting environment

## References and Notes

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