First language interference in writing proficiency in Indonesian as a third language for foreign speakers

Roely Ardiansyah [a, 1, *], Fransisca Dwi Harjanti [a, 2]

[a] Universitas Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

[1] roelyardiansyah_fbs@uwks.ac.id; [2] fransisca_dwiharjanti@uwks.ac.id

* Correspondent author

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
First language interference Foreign speakers Indonesian writing proficiency	This study explores first language (L1) interference in the writing proficiency of foreign speakers learning Indonesian as their third language (L3). The participants are two female international students enrolled in higher education institutions in Indonesia. The first participant is a native Spanish speaker (L1), fluent in English (L2), and currently acquiring Indonesian (L3). The second participant is a native Mandarin speaker (L1), also proficient in English (L2), and studying Indonesian (L3). This qualitative study uses Indonesian writing tests as the primary data source. Content analysis was employed to examine patterns of L1 interference at the syntactic and lexical levels. The findings reveal: (1) syntactic interference from Spanish (L1) and English (L2) to Indonesian (L3) significantly affects sentence structure and lexical choices; and (2) interference from Mandarin (L1) and English (L2) results in distinct structural influences on Indonesian (L3). These findings have pedagogical implications for teaching Indonesian to foreign speakers, particularly in addressing language transfer issues and designing targeted instructional strategies.

Introduction

In today's era of globalization, proficiency in communicating in multiple languages has become a valuable asset. Many individuals from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds learn new languages for purposes of education, career advancement, and intercultural interaction. Indonesian, as the official and widely spoken language in Indonesia, attracts the interest of many foreign speakers as a second or third language (Lopez, 2019; Hardini et al., 2023).

Learning a third language (L3) has its unique dynamics, which are often more complex than learning a second language (L2). Learners acquiring a third language typically already possess proficiency in two other languages, which can influence their comprehension, usage, and production of the third language. One of the phenomena commonly encountered in third-language acquisition is first language interference (Fitri & Alawiyah, 2023). This occurs because the structure, vocabulary, and patterns of the first language continue to influence the production of the third language.

Language interference often occurs in bilinguals, where elements of L2 influence or blend with L1 (Baker, 2001; Baghirova, 2021; Bailey et al., 2023). While many studies have examined L1 interference in L2 acquisition (e.g., Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015; Duangpaserth et al., 2022), research on its role in learning Indonesian as a third language (L3) remains limited. This is a notable gap, especially given Indonesian's unique structural and lexical features that may interact differently with learners' prior languages. The limited exploration of Indonesian as an L3 leaves questions about how L1 influences learners' writing

proficiency. Addressing this gap can provide valuable insights for developing more effective teaching strategies and materials tailored to multilingual learners.

This study adopts the cross-linguistic influence framework to examine how L1 affects the writing of foreign learners acquiring Indonesian as an L3. By exploring this under-researched context, the study offers both theoretical contributions and practical implications. Accordingly, the research investigates L1 interference in the writing proficiency of foreign speakers learning Indonesian as an L3, aiming to enrich the understanding of third language acquisition and support improved instructional practices.

Some studies have addressed first language interference in writing proficiency in Indonesian as a third language for foreign speakers (Budiharto, 2019; Zarbali et al., 2024). The foreign speakers in these studies come from China and Spain, with one participant from each country. Relevant previous research includes a study on phonological interference among BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) learners whose first language is French, specifically in the pronunciation of Indonesian vocabulary (Lantika & Cholsy, 2023).

The novelty of this current study lies in its focus on first language interference at the syntactic level exhibited by foreign speakers. Furthermore, the object of this study is the written work in Indonesian as a third language. This means that the speakers were already proficient in their first and second languages prior to learning Indonesian.

Syntactic interference in the context of foreign speakers learning Indonesian refers to the influence of sentence structures from a speaker's first language (L1) or other previously acquired languages (L2) on the construction of sentences in Indonesian (L3). This cross-linguistic influence often manifests as errors in word order, sentence construction, or grammatical agreement, particularly when learners rely on syntactic rules from languages they have previously mastered. Gass & Selinker (2008) note that syntactic interference occurs when the syntactic structures of L1 shape the way learners build structures in a subsequent language, potentially leading to non-native-like usage or persistent errors.

The phenomenon of syntactic interference is closely linked to the concept of *interlanguage* introduced by Gass & Selinker (2008), which describes a dynamic linguistic system developed by second or third language learners. This interlanguage draws upon the learner's prior language knowledge, combining elements of L1, L2, and the target language (L3). Syntactic interference is a natural feature of this transitional system and reflects the learner's evolving internal grammar (Evans & Larsen-Freeman, 2020).

While syntactic interference has been widely studied in the context of English or other dominant second languages (e.g., Masood et al., 2020; Munif & Setiawan, 2020; Marita & Jufrizal, 2021), empirical studies focusing specifically on syntactic interference in the acquisition of Indonesian as a third language remain limited. Previous studies, such as Munif & Setiawan (2020) and Marita & Jufrizal (2021), have examined broader issues in Indonesian language acquisition by foreign learners, such as morphosyntactic errors or lexical transfer, but have not specifically investigated how prior knowledge of multiple languages interacts to shape syntactic structures in Indonesian writing.

Moreover, most existing research on Indonesian as a second or third language tends to focus on vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, or general grammatical accuracy (e.g., Kosim, 2020), without isolating syntactic interference patterns at the sentence level that are attributable to specific L1 or L2 structures. This indicates a significant research gap in understanding how multilingual learners—particularly those with typologically different L1 and L2 backgrounds—transfer syntactic structures into their Indonesian writing.

To address these gaps, this study examines syntactic interference in the writing of international students learning Indonesian as their third language (L3), focusing on interference from both their L1 and L2. The study seeks to identify common patterns of syntactic transfer and analyze how these patterns affect learners' sentence construction in Indonesian. Drawing on the framework of second language acquisition proposed by Housen et al. (2012), which distinguishes between *accuracy* (conformity to target norms) and *fluency* (ease of expression), the study also considers the pedagogical implications of syntactic interference for teaching Indonesian to foreign speakers.

First language interference, also known as L1 interference, occurs when the structures, vocabulary, or patterns of an individual's first language influence their understanding and use of a second or newly learned language (Mirzayev, 2024). This phenomenon becomes especially pertinent when foreign speakers are learning to write in Indonesian as a third language (L3), as their first language (L1) can significantly shape sentence structures, grammatical choices, and lexical selection. Schwartz & Valian (2022) emphasize that L1 interference is not only a linguistic phenomenon but is also influenced by sociocultural factors such as learning environment, interaction with native speakers, and classroom dynamics. This supports the broader concept of cross-linguistic influence, where the rules of L1 permeate the use of subsequent languages, often resulting in systematic errors.

De Angelis & Selinker (2018) revisit contrastive analysis theory, which posits that structural differences between languages can predict language learning difficulties. While this theory has been

foundational, it often oversimplifies the multilingual learning process by focusing mainly on L1-L2 dynamics, leaving a gap in understanding the complexities of L3 acquisition—especially in written contexts.

To address this, scholars have turned to broader frameworks. Linguistic transfer theory (Ringbom, 2007) extends the scope to include L3, suggesting that the similarity or dissimilarity among L1, L2, and L3 determines the likelihood and severity of interference. Cognitive transfer theory (Ellis, 2008) adds a psychological dimension, explaining how mental representations from L1 influence how learners process and produce L2 and L3. Singleton (1999) further notes that cumulative exposure to L2 and L3 can mitigate L1 interference, while Dornyei (2005) highlights the role of motivation and affective factors. Moreover, Anderson (2002) introduces the concept of metacognitive awareness, suggesting that learners who are aware of their language use and strategies are better equipped to control and reduce interference.

Despite these developments, a notable gap remains in studies focusing specifically on L1 interference in the context of academic writing in L3 Indonesian. Most prior research has centered on spoken language or L1-L2 interactions, overlooking the unique cognitive and structural challenges posed by writing in L3. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how L1 influences manifest in the written production of foreign learners of Indonesian.

This study draws upon the linguistic transfer theory and cognitive transfer theory as its primary theoretical lenses. These frameworks enable a comprehensive exploration of how linguistic and cognitive elements from L1 interact with learners' developing proficiency in L3, specifically in written forms. By integrating these perspectives, the study aims to identify patterns of interference and explore the extent to which metacognitive awareness and learner background mediate these effects.

Method

This research adopts a case study design with a qualitative approach, focusing on linguistic analysis. The main objective of the study is to describe two forms of syntactic interference: (1) syntactic interference from Spanish (L1) and English (L2) in influencing Indonesian (L3), and (2) syntactic interference from Mandarin (L1) and English (L2) in influencing Indonesian (L3). The findings are based on data collected from foreign language speakers. The research data consist of nine written texts produced by two participants from different countries, namely China and Spain.

The data collection process involved two primary techniques. The first was sorting and grouping, which was applied to identify instances of syntactic interference in both language combinations: Spanish-English-Indonesian and Mandarin-English-Indonesian. These data were obtained from two research subjects whose first and second languages differ from Indonesian, thereby providing a contrasting basis for examining third language (L3) interference.

The second technique involved documenting sentences through a written test. Each participant was asked to complete a writing task in Indonesian, and the resulting texts were analyzed to uncover instances of syntactic interference. This method provided direct insights into how the participants' L1 and L2 structures influenced their use of Indonesian in written form.

The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques, applied to both categories of syntactic interference: from Spanish and English, and from Mandarin and English, in relation to Indonesian. The analysis focused on Indonesian texts written as a third language by foreign speakers. Specific attention was given to patterns of subordinate clause usage and common syntactic errors. To ensure the robustness of the findings, the results were assessed for reliability, replicability across different contexts, and validity. This comprehensive analysis aimed to reveal consistent interference patterns and provide a deeper understanding of multilingual syntactic transfer in written language production.

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings on syntactic interference include: (1) The influence of Spanish as the first language (L1) and English as the second language (L2) on Indonesian as the third language (L3). (2)The influence of Mandarin as L1 and English as L2 on Indonesian as L3. These two findings detail syntactic interference in terms of word usage, word order, and sentence construction chosen by foreign speakers.

The explanation of five representative data samples indicating syntactic interference from Spanish (L1) and English (L2) on Indonesian (L3) is presented as data (1).

(1) *"Saya sangat menikmati liburan saya di Bali, Indonesia."*

In data (1), the use of the word *"Saya"* as the main subject reflects typical usage in both Spanish and English, where *"saya"* (I, *yo*) is used as the primary subject in everyday sentences. In this Indonesian sentence, *"saya"* is correctly used, following the common subject-predicate-object (SVO) structure in Indonesian. Similarly, word order in Spanish and English also follows an SVO pattern. In the sentence *"Saya sangat menikmati liburan saya di Bali, Indonesia"*, this order is retained, despite Indonesian allowing more flexible word arrangements.

Interference may occur if Spanish or English speakers rigidly maintain the SVO pattern in Indonesian. Moreover, the use of the noun *"liburan"* and the preposition *"di"* aligns with Spanish and English constructions like *"en Bali"* or *"in Bali"* to indicate location. In Indonesian, the preposition *"di"* is used to denote location, as in this sentence: *"di Bali."* Spanish or English speakers may carry over their native structure, potentially resulting in interference.

Additionally, the phrase *"sangat menikmati"* is comparable to *"disfrutar mucho"* in Spanish and *"enjoy very much"* in English. However, the use of *"sangat"* as an intensifier aligns more closely with Indonesian language structure. The same syntactic features appear in data (2).

(2) *"Pantai-pantai di Pulau Lombok sangat indah dengan pasir putihnya."*

In data (2), Spanish tends to place adjectives after nouns, such as in *"playa bonita"* (beautiful beach). Conversely, English commonly places adjectives before nouns, such as *"beautiful beach."* In the Indonesian sentence, this pattern reflects influences from both languages.

Although there is no direct interference in this sentence, the use of the adjective *"indah"* before the noun *"pantai"* can be seen as influenced by English. Both Spanish and English also use prepositional phrases to add additional information to sentences. In Indonesian, the phrase *"dengan pasir putihnya"* mirrors similar structures in Spanish (*"con su arena blanca"*) and English (*"with its white sand"*).

Spanish and English tend to use complete phrases combining nouns with adverbs or adjectives, such as *"playas bonitas"* (beautiful beaches) or *"beautiful beaches."* In Indonesian, the construction *"pantai-pantai"* reflects a similar pluralization structure, even though Indonesian typically repeats the noun to indicate plurality.

Syntactic interference from Spanish and English in this Indonesian sentence is most evident in the placement of adjectives before nouns and the use of prepositional phrases for additional information. Although Indonesian has distinct syntactic and grammatical rules, the influence of Spanish and English structures and styles remains visible in such sentences.

Further analysis, highlighting differences in sentence structure, is presented in data (3).

(3) "Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia di sekolah ini."

In data (3), Spanish follows a Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO) word order, as in *"Yo estudio Indonesia en esta escuela"* ("I study Indonesian at this school"). Interference from Spanish may cause foreign speakers to place *"bahasa Indonesia"* (Indonesian language) immediately after *"belajar"* (study), as in Spanish, resulting in the construction *"Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia di sekolah ini."*

English also follows an SVO word order, as in *"I study Indonesian language at this school."* If foreign speakers are accustomed to English, they are likely to maintain the same SVO word order, producing the sentence *"Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia di sekolah ini."*

While Indonesian has more flexible sentence structures, it often follows an SPO pattern, as seen in this example. Although this flexibility allows for variation, interference from Spanish or English may be observed in the placement of *"bahasa Indonesia"* after *"belajar,"* because in both languages, the object (language) typically follows the verb.

The use of the preposition *"di"* (at) in Indonesian to denote location is similar to *"en"* in Spanish and *"at"* in English. While this does not result in significant interference, foreign speakers may adapt the preposition based on their familiarity with the equivalents in their native language.

In this context, syntactic interference from Spanish and English in the Indonesian sentence *"Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia di sekolah ini"* is particularly evident in the placement of *"bahasa Indonesia"* after *"belajar,"* influenced by the habitual word order or sentence construction of the speaker's native languages. The next explanation focuses on data (4).

(4) "Hari ini saya belajar kata-kata baru dalam bahasa Indonesia."

In data (4), Spanish often places nouns before verbs, which differs from Indonesian syntax. Such interference may result in a sentence like *"Hoy yo aprendo palabras nuevas en bahasa Indonesia"* ("Today I

study new words in Indonesian"). Upon closer analysis, the structure *"yo aprendo"* (I study) reflects Spanish syntax, whereas Indonesian should use *"saya belajar."*

Additionally, the use of prepositions in Spanish frequently diverges from Indonesian. For instance, *"en"* in Spanish, meaning *"in"* or *"at,"* is often used in place of *"dalam"* in Indonesian. A Spanish-speaking foreigner might produce a sentence like *"Hoy yo aprendo palabras nuevas en la bahasa Indonesia"* ("Today I study new words in Indonesian"), using *"en"* instead of *"dalam."*

In English, the characteristic SVO word order may also influence Indonesian sentence construction. This interference could lead to sentences like *"Today I learning new words in bahasa Indonesia"* ("Hari ini saya belajar kata-kata baru dalam bahasa Indonesia"). When analyzed, the structure *"I learning"* reflects English syntax, whereas Indonesian requires *"saya belajar."*

Furthermore, the use of articles, such as *"the"* in English, is more extensive compared to Indonesian, which has limited article usage. Consequently, English-speaking foreigners may insert unnecessary articles, resulting in a sentence like *"Today I am learning the new words in the bahasa Indonesia"* ("Hari ini saya belajar kata-kata baru dalam bahasa Indonesia").

Syntactic interference like this frequently occurs due to the influence of the speaker's native or second language on the target language. This highlights the complexity of translating or using a target language correctly, as differing syntactic rules can affect the accurate comprehension and production of sentences in a new context. The next explanation focuses on data (5).

(5) "Saya ingin belajar tentang budaya Indonesia lebih banyak lagi."

In data (5), interference from both Spanish and English can be observed in the sentence structure.

First, in Spanish, the common construction to express desire is *"querer + infinitive"*. For example, *"Quiero aprender más sobre la cultura de Indonesia"* ("I want to learn more about Indonesian culture"). A Spanish-speaking foreigner is likely to adopt this pattern when speaking or writing in Indonesian, which leads to a construction like *"Saya ingin belajar lebih banyak tentang budaya Indonesia lagi."* This sentence is influenced by the Spanish sentence structure, particularly in the placement of *"lagi"* (again) at the end of the sentence. In Indonesian, *"lagi"* is typically not placed at the end in this context, and its positioning here reflects a Spanish influence, where the expression *"más… otra vez"* (more... again) is more common.

Second, interference from English also affects the sentence. In English, to express a desire, the verb *"want"* is used followed by the base form of the verb. For example, *"I want to learn more about Indonesian culture."* A foreigner accustomed to English might replicate this structure in Indonesian, resulting in the sentence *"Saya ingin belajar tentang budaya Indonesia lebih banyak lagi."* The use of *"ingin"* (want) followed by the base verb *"belajar"* (learn) mirrors English syntax. Additionally, the phrase *"lebih banyak lagi"* (more again) is used to emphasize the intensity or quantity, a construction common in English, which further affects the flow of the Indonesian sentence.

Thus, the sentence *"Saya ingin belajar tentang budaya Indonesia lebih banyak lagi"* reflects both Spanish and English syntactic interference. From Spanish, it inherits the unusual placement of *"lagi"* at the end, and from English, it adopts the structure of *"ingin"* followed by the base verb and the intensifying phrase *"lebih banyak lagi."* These influences demonstrate how the sentence construction of the speaker's native language affects the use of the target language, in this case, Indonesian. The next explanation focuses on data (6).

(6) "Hari ini, saya belajar bagaimana cara bermain dakon."

In data (6), syntactic interference from Mandarin and English can be seen in two different aspects that affect the structure of the Indonesian sentence.

Interference from Mandarin: Mandarin has a flexible subject-predicate-object (SVO) word order, especially in the placement of time markers. In Mandarin, time phrases are often placed after the subject or in a flexible position depending on the context. For example, a sentence in Mandarin might be altered to *"Saya hari ini belajar bagaimana cara bermain dakon."* Here, the time marker *"Hari ini"* (today) is moved to follow the subject *"saya"* (I).

When a Mandarin speaker speaks or writes in Indonesian, this structural influence leads them to place time markers (such as "Hari ini") after the subject. However, in Indonesian, time phrases are generally more naturally placed at the beginning of the sentence (as in the correct sentence: *"Hari ini, saya belajar…"*).

Interference from English: English also follows the subject-predicate-object (SVO) word order, similar to Indonesian. However, in English, there are differences in the use of auxiliary verbs or prepositions that can affect sentence construction in Indonesian. For example, in English, the word "about" is used to introduce an object or a broader clause, as in the sentence *"Today, I learned about how to play dakon."* Here, "about" functions to introduce the topic or method, which in Indonesian could be translated as "tentang" or

"cara." However, in the more accurate Indonesian sentence, the use of "tentang" here does not align well with the Indonesian structure, so an English-influenced speaker might write *"Saya belajar tentang cara bermain dakon,"* which reflects interference from English structure.

Overall, syntactic interference from Mandarin is evident in the influence on the placement of time markers, while interference from English is seen in word choice or sentence construction differences. Although Indonesian has a syntactic structure different from both of these languages, the influence of the speaker's native language (Mandarin and English) still affects how they construct sentences in Indonesian, both in word order and in choosing words that are more characteristic of their native language.

The next discussion will focus on analyzing syntactic interference in the sentence structure of data (7).

(7) "Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia untuk bisa berkomunikasi dengan teman-teman baru di sini."

In data (7), syntactic interference from Mandarin and English is observed in the structure of the sentence. Both Mandarin and English follow a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order, which is similar to that of Indonesian.

Interference from Mandarin: Mandarin also generally follows an SVO structure, as seen in the sentence *"我学习印尼语"* (Wǒ xuéxí Yìnníyǔ, meaning "I am learning Indonesian"). This word order aligns with the structure used in both English and Indonesian. In this case, Mandarin speakers may not experience significant difficulties when constructing a sentence in Indonesian, as the basic SVO word order is consistent. However, Mandarin does not have auxiliary verbs like Indonesian does (e.g., "untuk," "bisa"), which may cause issues when expressing purpose or ability. Mandarin speakers might struggle with or omit the necessary auxiliary verbs or particles in Indonesian.

Interference from English: English also follows the SVO structure and similarly uses auxiliary verbs for expressing purpose, such as "to" in the phrase *"to communicate."* This is analogous to the Indonesian construction using the words "untuk" and "bisa" to express purpose or capability (e.g., *"untuk bisa berkomunikasi"*). English speakers may be influenced to use "to" in Indonesian sentences, even though it is not required in the Indonesian syntax. This can result in sentences like *"Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia to communicate..."* which is syntactically incorrect in Indonesian.

Syntactic Analysis: For both Mandarin and English speakers, the basic SVO word order aligns with Indonesian, so there is no major issue in the sentence structure itself. However, the use of auxiliary verbs and functional particles can present difficulties. Mandarin speakers may omit or misuse auxiliary verbs due to their absence in their native language, while English speakers may incorrectly insert unnecessary particles like "to," influenced by the English structure.

Syntactic interference from Mandarin and English in Indonesian primarily affects the use of auxiliary verbs and particles. Although the basic sentence structure (SVO) is similar, differences in auxiliary verbs and functional particles can lead to errors in Indonesian sentences. Understanding the syntactic differences between these languages is essential to avoid such errors when learning Indonesian. The next analysis, as presented in data (8), will continue this discussion.

(8) "Hari ini saya belajar tentang kata sapaan dalam bahasa Indonesia, seperti 'halo' dan 'selamat pagi'."

In data (8), there is syntactic interference from Mandarin and English that affects the construction of the sentence in Indonesian. Mandarin generally follows a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order, similar to Indonesian. For example, in Mandarin, the sentence *"今天我学习印尼语中的招呼语，比如'你好'和'早上好'"* (Jīntiān wǒ xuéxí Yìnníyǔ zhōng de zhāohu yǔ, bǐrú 'nǐ hǎo' hé 'zǎoshang hǎo') means "Today, I am learning greetings in Indonesian, such as 'hello' and 'good morning.'" This structure aligns with the SVO word order used in Indonesian, with "saya" (subject) - "belajar" (verb) - "tentang kata sapaan dalam bahasa Indonesia" (object), followed by a detailed clause like "seperti 'halo' dan 'selamat pagi'."

Interference from Mandarin and English: The basic word order in both Mandarin and English is not problematic for constructing sentences in Indonesian. However, challenges arise in the use of conjunctions or linking words to connect detailed clauses, such as "seperti 'halo' dan 'selamat pagi'" in Indonesian. In Mandarin, there is no equivalent phrase for "seperti" (meaning "such as" or "like"). Mandarin speakers may face difficulty incorporating the correct conjunction in this context. On the other hand, English speakers typically use phrases like "such as" or "like" to introduce examples, which can lead to interference in Indonesian. While these words may be used by English speakers in Indonesian, they are not entirely accurate in all contexts, as "seperti" is the more appropriate conjunction in Indonesian.

Potential Errors: Mandarin speakers might struggle with properly incorporating the word "seperti" because Mandarin lacks a direct equivalent. Moreover, English speakers could adopt a more formal or detailed construction, such as using "such as" or "like," which may sound too rigid or formal for the more

casual tone often used in Indonesian. The interference from both languages could lead to awkward or incorrect sentence construction when introducing examples or explanations.

Conclusion: Syntactic interference from Mandarin and English affects the use of conjunctions or phrases that introduce examples in Indonesian, even though the basic SVO word order is similar across these languages. Mandarin speakers may face difficulties with appropriate word choices for conjunctions, while English speakers might overuse formal constructions. A solid understanding of the syntax and style of Indonesian is crucial for foreign learners to avoid errors and to ensure their sentences are both grammatically correct and natural in tone.

The next analysis, as shown in data (9), will explore a similar issue in sentence construction but with different syntactic influences.

(9) " Saya akan pergi ke sekolah besok."

In data (9), syntactic interference from Mandarin and English is visible in the sentence structure. In Mandarin, the word order generally follows a subject-predicate-object (SPO) pattern, which is similar to Indonesian. For example, the sentence *"Saya akan pergi ke sekolah besok"* translated into Mandarin is *"我明天要去学校"* (wǒ míngtiān yào qù xuéxiào). Although the Mandarin structure follows the SPO order, Mandarin speakers tend to maintain the same structure when writing in Indonesian. Moreover, Mandarin often uses specific temporal particles like *"明天"* (míngtiān) to indicate time, meaning "tomorrow." Mandarin speakers might continue using the word *"besok"* (tomorrow) in a similar context in Indonesian, even without fully considering whether its use is grammatically correct in more complex sentences.

Interference from English: English presents more complex verb tense constructions, which are quite different from both Mandarin and Indonesian. Mandarin speakers who learn Indonesian through English may be influenced by English tense structures and use them incorrectly in Indonesian. In English, tenses play a significant role in indicating time, whereas Indonesian tends to be more straightforward with its use of time-related words and verbs. Thus, Mandarin speakers who have been exposed to English might apply English-like tense constructions to Indonesian sentences. This could lead to the use of borrowed words or sentence structures that are more closely aligned with English rather than the simpler, more direct approach used in Indonesian.

Result of Syntactic Interference: As a result of these syntactic interferences, sentences produced by Mandarin speakers in Indonesian may sound unnatural or contain structural errors that are not typical in native Indonesian. Common issues include the improper use of particles or auxiliary verbs, incorrect word choices, or errors in word order that can affect the clarity of the sentence for native Indonesian speakers. For example, Mandarin speakers may use unnecessary particles or auxiliary verbs influenced by English, leading to constructions that do not sound native in Indonesian.

It is crucial for Mandarin speakers learning Indonesian to understand the syntactic, vocabulary, and sentence structure differences between Mandarin, English, and Indonesian. A solid understanding of these differences will help them avoid syntactic interference and produce more accurate and natural sentences in Indonesian. Therefore, recognizing these syntactic variances is key for learners to communicate effectively and avoid errors.

Discussion

This discussion is based on the findings of the study, which show the significant impact of syntactic interference from Spanish (B1) and English (B2) on Indonesian (B3). This interference affects sentence structure and the use of language elements in various ways.

Interference from Spanish (B1). Bilingual speakers of Spanish often translate the more flexible sentence structures of Spanish into Indonesian, resulting in sentences that are unnatural or incorrect according to Indonesian grammar. Additionally, the use of prepositions, which differ between Spanish and Indonesian, also causes errors. For example, the sentence *"Saya belajar dari bahasa Spanyol"* ("I learn from Spanish") uses the preposition *"dari"* (from), which is not appropriate in this context in Indonesian. This highlights the need for more specific syntactic training for bilingual speakers to reduce errors and improve their Indonesian language proficiency.

Interference from English (B2). Bilingual speakers of English are often influenced by English sentence structures and elements when speaking in Indonesian. Common errors include the incorrect use of articles, such as in the sentence *"Saya ingin membeli the buku"* ("I want to buy the book"), where the English article *"the"* is used in a sentence that does not require it in Indonesian. Additionally, errors are also found in the use of prepositions, such as in the sentence *"Saya tinggal in rumah"* ("I live in a house"), where the preposition *"in"* is borrowed directly from English. These errors underscore the importance of deeper

training to understand the differences between English and Indonesian syntactic structures to improve the accuracy of Indonesian language use.

Interference from Mandarin (B1). In the case of bilingual Mandarin speakers, interference is more apparent in the use of adverbs, particles, and prepositions that do not conform to Indonesian rules. Common errors include unnatural word order, such as *"Saya besok pergi ke pasar"* ("I tomorrow go to the market") and *"Teman de saya"* ("Friend de mine"). These errors arise from the differences in sentence structure and the use of particles in Mandarin. Mandarin speakers tend to translate sentence structures directly without making the necessary adjustments for Indonesian. Therefore, bilingual Mandarin speakers need specialized training on Indonesian sentence structure to reduce the interference that occurs.

Errors in Second Language (L2) Learning. Second language (L2) acquisition cannot be separated from errors, which can be classified into three types: lapses, errors, and mistakes (Thaman, 2017; Andriyana et al., 2022). *Lapses* occur when L2 learners unintentionally change the way they express a sentence before completing it. *Errors* happen when L2 learners violate the rules of the language system they are learning. *Mistakes* refer to errors caused by choosing incorrect words in a given context (Nurwicaksono & Amelia, 2018; Dobrynina, 2018). This study focuses on errors caused by phonological interference, particularly sounds in Indonesian that are mispronounced by BIPA learners with French as their L1. Some Indonesian sounds, such as /g/, /h/, /k/, /r/, /s/, and nasal vowel sounds like /ɛ̃/, /œ̃/, /ɔ̃/, /ã/, are often mispronounced due to the influence of French phonology. However, the frequency and level of phonological interference may vary depending on the learner's background (Shiaondo & Dangana, 2020; Lantika & Cholsy, 2023; Alisoy, 2024).

These errors indicate that each second language learner brings different influences from their first language, which can affect their learning, both in sentence structure and pronunciation. Therefore, it is important for Indonesian language teaching to adapt its materials and teaching techniques based on the learners' first language background to reduce interference and improve the accuracy of the Indonesian they are learning.

Ellis (2003) states that learning a language other than the mother tongue is not problematic, as it is considered a second language, third language, fourth language, and so on. The implication of this study highlights the importance of understanding the interference of the first language in third language acquisition. Teachers need to pay attention to these interference patterns and provide appropriate guidance to foreign language learners to help them overcome the errors that arise. The development of learning materials that consider the structural differences between the first language and the third language is also crucial in improving students' writing proficiency.

Conclusion

The syntactic interference from Spanish (B1), English (B2), and Mandarin (B1) to Indonesian (B3) has a significant impact on sentence structure and language element usage. From Spanish, interference appears in the form of flexible sentence structures and the use of different prepositions, resulting in unusual sentences such as "Saya belajar dari bahasa Spanyol" (I study from Spanish). From English, interference manifests in the incorrect use of articles, prepositions, and sentence structure variations, as seen in errors like "Saya ingin membeli the buku" (I want to buy the book) and "Saya tinggal in rumah" (I live in the house). Meanwhile, from Mandarin, interference is often observed in the use of adverbs, particles, and prepositions, such as "Saya besok pergi ke pasar" (I tomorrow go to the market) and "Teman de saya" (My friend).

Overall, these syntactic differences emphasize the need for specific syntactic training for third language learners to address the errors that arise and improve Indonesian proficiency in bilingual speakers. The focus of training should include adjustments to sentence structure, and the correct use of particles and prepositions to enhance accuracy and fluency in Indonesian language use.

Declarations

informed consent voluntarily after receiving adequate information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks.

Additional information : No additional information is available for this paper.

References

Alisoy, H. (2024). Exploring language acquisition: The role of native language interference in ESL learners. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Studies*, *November 2024*. https://doi.org/10.69760/jales.2024.00105

Anderson, N. J. (2002). *The role of metacognition in second language teaching and learning (ERIC Digest)*. ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED463659

Andriyana, Hoang, V. A., H., & Iswatiningsih, D. (2022). Kesalahan fonologi Mahasiswa Vietnam tingkat BIPA 1 dalam pelafalan fonem bahasa Indonesia. *Jurnal Bahasa Indonesia Penutur Asing, 4*(2), 119–124. https://doi.org/10.26499/jbipa.v4i2.4589

Baghirova, S. M. (2021). The kinds of the linguistic interference. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 11*(2), 176–181. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1102.09

Bailey, L. M., Lockary, K., & Higby, E. (2023). Cross-linguistic influence in the bilingual lexicon: Evidence for ubiquitous facilitation and context-dependent interference effects on lexical processing. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 27*(3), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728923000597

Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (3rd ed). Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Budiharto, A. (2019). Native language interference on target language writings of Indonesian EFL students: An exploratory case study. *Indonesian EFL Journal, 5*(1), 107–116. https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v5i1.1630

De Angelis, G., & Selinker, L. (2018). *Crosslinguistic influence and the second language user*. Routledge.

Derakhshan, A., & Karimi, E. (2015). The interference of first language and second language acquisition. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 5*(10), 2112–2117. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0510.19

Dobrynina, O. (2018). Problems of academic writing: Lexical errors, their causes, and correction strategies. *Vysshee Obrazovanie v Rossii (Higher Education in Russia), 27*(10), 75–83. https://doi.org/10.31992/0869-3617-2018-27-10-75-83

Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Duangpaserth, K., Meunviseth, Y., & Chanboualapha, S. (2022). An investigation into L1 interference in Lao EFL students' writing and translation for curriculum and teaching improvement. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language, 12*(2), 362–382. https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v12i2.4105

Ellis, R. (2003). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

_____. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

Evans, D. R., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (2020). Bifurcations and the emergence of L2 syntactic structures in a complex dynamic system. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 574603. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.574603

Fitri, R., & Alawiyah, T. (2023). The impact of first language on second language acquisition: Transfer and interference. *Transpublika International Research in Exact Sciences (TIRES), 2*(4). https://ojs.transpublika.com/index.php/TIRES

Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203932841

Hardini, T. I., Yulianeta, Y., Fikrianto, M., Hamidah, H., Emilia, E., & Kharismawati, L. R. S. (2023). ASEAN students' interest in learning the Indonesian language: A descriptive study from the perspective of SEAMEO ASEAN. *International Journal of Language Education, 7*(4). https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v7i4.59491

Housen, A., Kuiken, F., & Vedder, I. (2012). *Frontiers in second language acquisition research: Complexity, accuracy, and fluency*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.32.01hou

Kosim, A. K. (2020). Lexical transfer in Indonesian language acquisition as the third language. *Gramatika: Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, 6*(2). https://doi.org/10.22202/jg.2020.v6i2.4143

Lantika, D., & Cholsy, H. (2023). *Interferensi fonologi pemelajar BIPA dengan bahasa pertama bahasa Prancis dalam pelafalan kosakata bahasa Indonesia. Jurnal Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing, 5*(1), 12-22. https://doi.org/10.26499/jbipa.v5i1.6096

Lopez, L. G. M. (2019). The Indonesian language and its potential to become an international language. In *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Arts, Language, and Culture (ICALC 2018)*. Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/icalc-18.2019.40

Marita, T., & Jufrizal. (2021). L1 syntactic interference in ESP students' writing assignments. In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on English Language and Teaching (ICOELT-8 2020)*. Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210914.032

Masood, M. H., Shafi, S., Rahim, M. Y., & Darwesh, M. A. (2020). Interference of L1 (Urdu) in L2 (English) in Pakistan: Teaching English as a second language. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 9*(5), 110–118. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.9n.5p.110

Mirzayev, E. (2024). The influence of first language interference on ESL writing skills. *EuroGlobal Journal of Linguistics and Language Education, 1*(1). https://doi.org/10.69760/ds5gc908

Munif, D. N., & Setiawan, B. (2020). Syntax interference on translation of Indonesia-English text. *International Journal of English Learning and Applied Linguistics (IJELAL), 1*(1), 115–123. https://doi.org/10.21111/ijelal.v1i1.5054

Nurwicaksono, B. D., & Amelia, D. (2018). Analisis kesalahan berbahasa Indonesia pada teks ilmiah mahasiswa. *AKSIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, 2*(2), 138–153. https://doi.org/10.21009/AKSIS.020201

Ringbom, H. (2007). *Cross-linguistic similarity in foreign language learning*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.27939672

Schwartz, B. D., & Valian, V. (2022). *Theories of second language acquisition: Critical reviews and contemporary issues*. Cambridge University Press.

Shiaondo, A. S., & Dangana, D. (2020). Phonological analysis of the effects of first language acquisition (L1) on second language learning: A case study of Tiv language and English language. *Ahyu: A Journal of Language and Literature, 1*(3), 103–109. https://doi.org/10.56666/ahyu.v1i3.11

Singleton, D. (1999). *Language acquisition: The age factor*. Multilingual Matters.

Thaman, A. R. (2017). Errors in second language acquisition and their types. *SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH (SMJI), 5*(12). https://ijellh.com/OJS/index.php/OJS/article/view/2447

Zarbali, N., Suroso, S., & Syamsi, K. (2024). First language interference in speaking and writing Indonesian language of Azerbaijani students in Indonesian language course at Azerbaijan University of Languages. *Forum for Linguistic Studies, 6*(2). https://doi.org/10.59400/fls.v6i2.2137