



Focus on the Learner's Language: Insights from an Interlanguage Study in the Indonesian Context

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Abstract. Most university students in Indonesia have been learning English for more than ten years, but still find it difficult to express ideas in English properly. This study discusses interlanguage produced by an Indonesian adult learner who is studying English at a state university. The authors analysed samples of her English expressions based on certain processes in error analysis. The writers reveal that the student gets into difficulties in producing correct grammatical features related to past tenses, plural forms, and articles 'the' and 'a'. The learner's errors might be due to the interference of L1, intralingual factors, negative transfers of training, strategies of L2 learning, and communication strategies. Apart from involving more participants for more variety of data, it is recommended that future researchers can investigate the effect of errors on learners when they are in the process of mastering English. In doing so, the researchers will be more able to provide comprehensive insights into the significant role of error analysis in English language teaching and learning.

Keywords: error analysis · grammatical features · interlanguage · L1 · L2

1 Introduction

Linguists have conducted research on language learner systems with a variety of learners for decades. Chomsky (1986, cited in Cook, 1993, 2016) states that the research has tried to describe what speakers of a certain language know about the language itself, how the language is acquired by the human mind, and how the knowledge of the language is used. Furthermore, some methods have been developed for decades to find out how second language learning works. Weinreich proposed *Language Contact* in the 1950s which was then followed by Lado's *Contrastive Analysis* and Chomsky's *Language Acquisition Devices*. To develop the second language acquisition theories, Nemser proposed *Approximative Systems* in the 1970s. Selinker then proposed *Error Analysis* as a basis to examine the learners' interlanguage. From this point forward, studies of interlanguage in English learning in countries where English as a foreign language have been emphasised and developed (Cook, 1993, 2016).

Error analysis has some pedagogical benefits. Dulay, Burt, Krahsen (1982) and Corder (1981, cited in Amiri and Puteh, 2017) argue that error analysis might be beneficial not only for teachers, but also for students and researchers. For teachers, error analysis enables them to know the current level of their students' learning and the difficulties that the students have (Jabeen, Kazemian, Mustafai, 2015). It is expected that by understanding their students' correct and incorrect language production, teachers will then design and focus their teaching on the problematic features experienced by their students. Furthermore, students might use error analysis as a tool to develop their learning. They will be aware of which areas they have mastered and which need to improve. For the researchers, error analysis provides insights into how learners learn a foreign or second language and the strategies they use to master the language.

There has been a body of research in error analysis in a wide range of areas. Some researchers focussed their studies on types of errors in students' writing (Abushihab, 2014; Gozali, 2017; Ratnaningsih, & Azizah, 2019; Sunandar & Susanti, 2020). Others focussed their investigations on the interference of mother tongue on students' English grammatical production (Mubarok & Nur'aisyah, 2020; Syarif, 2014; Yuniswati, 2017; Vâlcea, 2020). Students' errors in their spoken production were also investigated by Masroor and Abdullah (2020), Safrida (2016), and Sastra (2014).

This paper describes an interlanguage study which investigates the performance of an Indonesian adult learner who is studying English at a state university. To begin with, we discuss some theories related to interlanguage, developmental stages in learner language, and error analysis. We then analyse and elaborate on the English performance of the Indonesian adult learner based on error analysis.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Interlanguage

Interlanguage is principally the type of language which is produced by second or foreign-language learners who are still in the process of learning the new language (Richards, 2010). The learner's language system is not the system of either his native language or second/foreign language, but a system which is based on the learner's best effort to produce the second or foreign language. The learner's language, therefore, contains some elements in his first and second/foreign languages.

Selinker (1972, cited in Ellis, 2008) used the term interlanguage to refer to the learner's systematic knowledge of the second language which is independent of both the learner's first and the target languages. He then suggests five processes which occur in interlanguage. The first is *language transfer* which means the learner uses his first language (L1) as a resource and therefore, there is a negative transfer of aspects of L1 into the second language (L2). The second is *overgeneralization*, meaning the learner uses an L2 rule in situations in which a native speaker would not. This can occur at several levels such as phonetic, grammatical, lexical, and discourse levels. The third is *transfer of training* that may happen when the teaching of the target language creates language rules that are not part of the L2. Consequently, learners will use the forms that they know rather than try out ones that they are not sure of. The fourth is *strategies of L2 learning* in which the learner simplifies the target language because s/he probably cannot produce

Table 1. Acquisition of Grammatical Morphemes in English as L1 and L2

FIRST LANGUAGE	SECOND LANGUAGE
Present progressing <i>-ing</i>	Articles ' <i>a</i> '/' <i>the</i> '
Plural <i>-s</i>	Present progressing <i>-ing</i>
Past irregular	Plural <i>-s</i>
Possessive <i>-s</i>	Past regular <i>-ed</i>
Articles ' <i>a</i> '/' <i>the</i> '	Past irregular
Past regular <i>-ed</i>	Possessive <i>-s</i>
Third person singular <i>-s</i>	Third person singular <i>-s</i>

the target forms or because *s/he* does not feel sure. The last is *communication strategies* that the learner leaves out grammatical items which cause him not communicative in conversations. Furthermore, different from proponents of contrastive analysis who believe that language learning is the result of imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit formation, supporters of the five processes argue that transfer or interference is not the absolute explanation for all of the learners' difficulties with the target language. Interference probably happens whenever the habits of the learners' native language are not the same with those of the target language.

2.2 Development Stages in Learner Language

Research on both L1 and L2 acquisitions has concluded that language acquisition takes place in developmental stages and the stages are systematically sequenced. Numerous developmental sequences in L1 and L2 learners are usually alike. L2 learners of different L1 backgrounds and learning situations even share similar developmental sequences. The things learned early by a learner in a particular place are potentially learned early by other learners in different places. Moreover, L2 learners in the early stage are categorised by three language traits. The first is *silent period* which does not happen in all learners. It generally happens to children who have not mastered the rules of their first languages. The second is *formulaic speech* in which early learners tend to use expressions or utterances which are learned as memorized chunks at length. The last is *structural and semantic simplification* which particularly occurs in unplanned language use (Ellis, 2008).

As there are similarities and differences between first and second language acquisitions, Table 1 compares the sequences of grammatical morphemes between first and second languages. The morphemes are usually acquired by the learners starting from the top to the bottom (Brown, 1973 & Dulay and Burt, 1974, cited in Cook, 1993, 2016).

2.3 Error Analysis

The study of errors is conducted through *error analysis* that focuses on the learner's first language and the target language. The methodology for investigating the learner's errors provides evidence of the system of the language that the learner has learned. In

conducting research on error analysis, Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 2008) proposes five steps.

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

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

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

Concerning types of errors based on their systematicity, Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 2008) differentiates three types of errors: presystematic errors that take place when the learner is not aware of the existence of a certain rule in the target language, systematic errors that happen when the learner has discovered a rule but it is the incorrect one, and postsystematic errors that occur when the learner know the correct rule of the target language but s/he uses it inconsistently.

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

There are various sources of errors which have been identified by some researchers. Richards (1971, cited in Ellis, 2008) classifies three sources of errors: interference errors that are a result of 'the use of element from one language while speaking another', intralingual errors which consist of overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized, and developmental errors which take place when the learner tries to build up a hypothesis about the target language with his limited experience.

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

3 Method

This study is qualitative in nature as it is intended to give an in-depth description of the learner's interlanguage (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Cohen et al., 2017). The analysis is organized in accordance with the steps of conducting an *error analysis* proposed by Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 2008). However, there are only four steps involved in this study, which are, *collection of a sample of learner language*, *identification of errors*, *description of errors*, and *explanation of errors*. The last stage of error analysis, *evaluation of errors*, is not included since the objective of the paper is to describe the rules underlying the learner's language.

In the *collection of a sample of learner language*, we consider that the sample used in this study is categorized as an incidental sample since it involved one learner as the sole participant (Forbes et al., 2011; Griffiee, 2012; Huitema, 2010; Kazdin, 2010). The participant is a 21 year-old female adult learner from Indonesia who is currently studying English at a state university. Regarding her English proficiency, she is currently in the intermediate level. She has been learning English formally since she was at her secondary school. In addition, she once lived in Melbourne, Australia for a year.

The interview was conducted before the pandemic hit the world in early 2020. The sample of the learner's language was collected cross-sectionally through an interview with the participant. The topics of the interview were daily topics such as the participant's expectations, hobbies, past experiences, and future endeavours. The thirty-minute interview was conducted in the participant's study room in order to make her feel relaxed and convenient. The equipment used in recording the interview was a Sony cassette mini recorder completed with a small microphone.

In the *identification of errors*, we first transcribed the recorded interview. We then started to identify the errors concerning grammatical features. There were some areas of errors found in the learner's language, including past tenses, plural forms, articles, affixes, prepositions, present tenses, and auxiliaries. Nevertheless, we decided to focus on three major areas, i.e., past tenses, plural forms, and articles because they were the most frequent errors found in the learner's language.

4 Results

Having done the collection of a sample of learner language and identification of errors, we then proceeded to the next two stages: description of errors and explanation of errors.

4.1 Description of Errors

This section is divided into three groups of types of errors, that are, past tenses, plural forms, and articles. Each area of errors was described separately, and the correct and incorrect forms made by the participant were shown in the form of tables.

Table 2. Correct use of past tense in the learner's language

LINE	INTERLANGUAGE FORM
3	When I <i>arrived</i> here
43	If I <i>won</i> \$1 million,
53	Yeah I think when I <i>was</i> in senior high school
64	So, the best time is when I <i>was</i> in the secondary high school.
80	Because I visit – <i>visited</i> my brother
150	Yeah, I love dancing and from when I <i>was</i> kid until I <i>was</i> a teenager
176	Yeah, when I- when I <i>was</i> ee in a primary school.....
193	Until I'm – I <i>was</i> in secondary high school

a. Past Tenses.

It is shown in the transcription that the learner has employed past tenses many times in order to explain her past experiences. In some cases, this learner was able to use the past tenses correctly, but in most cases, she made numerous errors. The following tables illustrate the correct and incorrect forms of past tense. In Table 2, the bold words are the learner's correct forms of past tense. Meanwhile the bold words in Table 3 indicate the learner's incorrect past tense forms and the correct forms in the Target Language column.

From Table 3, it can be seen that the learner tended to make errors in applying the rule of past tenses in expressing her ideas of something that happened in the past. The Table 4 shows the past verbs which were used correctly by the learner. These verbs are either regular or irregular verbs.

The Table 4 indicates that the learner has knowledge about some regular past verb forms. The only correct form of the irregular past verb is *won*. On the other hand, Table 5 demonstrates the incorrect past verb forms made by the learner in expressing the past activities. The verbs in the table are the corrected forms. All the following verbs are derived from Table 3.

From the Table 5, it can be inferred that the learner has a weakness in producing irregular past verb forms. Her control of regular past verb forms is also somewhat weak.

The discussion of the detailed feature and underlying rules of the learner language would be explained more in the explanation of errors.

b. Plural Forms.

The second area of errors found in the learner's language is the use of regular plural forms. The correct application of plural forms is shown in Table 6. Furthermore, the incorrect use of plural forms is revealed in Table 7.

Table 3. Incorrect use of past tense in the learner's language

LINE	INTERLANGUAGE FORM	TARGET LANGUAGE FORM
4	I am quite surprised	I was quite surprised
4	it's not like what I ee expect	it's not like what I ee expected
22	I expect that Australia is very discipline	I expected that Australia is very disciplined
23	I think the bus schedule is	I thought the bus schedule was
24	I ee (#) experience many bus schedule ...	I ee (#) experienced many bus schedules
54	it is the most happiest period in my life	it was the happiest period in my life
55–56	I make a friends and we go together and have fun ...	I made friends and we went together and had fun ...
58	After we ee study at the college //(#) ee making friends is not very easy ...	After we ee studied at the college //(#) ee making friends was not very easy ...
134	It is the first experience I touch the snow	It was the first experience I touched the snow
150	I like to dance traditional dancing	I liked to dance traditional dancing
176–177	When I was ee in a primary school, my mother always send me to Bali when I have a holiday and take a course	When I was ee in primary school, my mother always sent me to Bali when I had a holiday and took a course in Bali
199	When there is -	When there was -
202	There is a celebrate something	There was a celebration/they celebrated something

Table 4. Correct past forms of verbs in the learner's language

CORRECT VERBS		
Line	Regular	Irregular
3	arrived	–
43	–	Won
53	was	–
59	married	–
80	visited	–

From the two Tables 6 and 7, there is a tendency that the learner has not mastered the rule and the application of plural forms in English. A more detailed explanation of the underlying pattern of learner language regarding plural forms would be discussed in the explanation of errors.

Table 5. Corrected past forms of verbs in the learner's language

CORRECTED PAST VERB FORMS		
Line	Regular	Irregular
4	was	–
4	expected	–
23	–	thought
24	experienced	–
55	–	made
55	–	went
56	–	had
58	studied	–
134	touched	–
150	liked	–
176	–	Sent
177	–	Took

Table 6. Correct plural forms of the learner's language

CORRECT PLURAL FORMS	
Line	Learner Language
7	several people across the street in not in
28	Three months
37	I will be here for two years

c. Articles '*the*' and '*a*'.

The learner also has some problems in using articles. The Tables 8 and 9 illustrate the correct and incorrect use of articles '*the*' and '*a*'.

From the two Tables 8 and 9, it can be said that the learner tended to use article '*the*' in conveying her utterances. At times, the learner used this article correctly because she referred to the object that she mentioned previously.

4.2 Explanation of Errors

In this section, the three areas of errors described previously were discussed in detail. The explanation includes the rules underlying the learner language for each type of errors as well as the causes of the existing errors.

Table 7. Incorrect plural forms found in the learner's language

INCORRECT PLURAL FORMS		
Line	Interlanguage Form	Target Language Form
25	Many bus schedule are	Many bus schedules are
55	I make a friends	I make friends
77	The island that I have been there is just Bali and Madura	The islands that I have visited are only Bali and Madura
85	Kupang is dry islands	Kupang is a dry island
85–86	There are many dry land	There are many dry lands
92	They completed their car	They completed their cars
144	I love ee badminton, swimming and basketballs	I love ee badminton, swimming and basketball

a. Past Tenses.

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

(3) but **when I arrived here**, I quite – I *am* quite surprised ee it's not like ee what I ee *expect*

(53) Yeah, I think **when I was in senior high school** it *is* the most happiest period in my life because ee yeah you see in a senior school, in a cck I *make* a friends and we go together and *have* fun //and something like that.

(64) So, the best time *is* **when I was in the secondary high school**

(150) **when I was kid until I was a teenager** I – I *like* to dance traditional

(176) **when I was ee in a primary school**, my mother always *send* me to Bali when - when I *have* a holiday and I *take* a course in Bali

All the time clauses (when- clauses) use the correct marked verb. Nevertheless, after these clauses she did not mark the verbs to indicate past tense (the italic words). Once she marked the first verb with past form to indicate that she was talking about something happened in the past, she did not change the other following verbs into past forms.

(58) But after we ee **study** at the college //(#) ee cck making friends is not very easy

In this sentence, she did not mark the word *study* as past verb form because this sentence is a continuation of her previous sentences in lines 53–56 which had been marked as a past sentence with the clause '*Yeah I think when I was in senior high school*'.

Table 8. Correct use of articles of the learner's language

CORRECT USE OF ARTICLES	
Line	Learner Language
5–6	the technology is not ee very high
6	the ee society ee here I also see that people are ee not discipline
8	I see that the people is mostly Asian not the British
16	yeah the different is public transport
16	Here the public transport is very good
17	the service is very- (#) very good
23	the bus schedule is very punctual
43	I will travel around the world
54	it is the most happiest period in my life
55	You see in a senior school
64	So the best time is when I was in the secondary high school
77	the island that I have been
85	the – the tree is ee you know there are
86	the land is not rich.
91	the taxi - the cab there
96	music loudly to attract the youngster
130	Yeah, for me the most interesting is
159	there is a ee a history – not not a history – a story behind it
176	when I was ee in a primary school
177	when I have a holiday and I take a course in Bali
189	I join a club, a dancing club
199	in a school performance

Another underlying pattern of this learner's language of the past tense is that whenever she used the adverb word *always*, she would add it to the unmarked verb even when she tried to explain her experience.

(176) when I was ee in a primary school, my mother **always send** me to Bali

(197) I **always perform**

We think that this learner also understands that the adverb *always* is used to show a habit and therefore, she uses the unmarked verb forms. Furthermore, the bold verb in line 176 above is not the first verb of the sentence which is responsible to show the past-time signal.

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

Table 9. Incorrect plural forms of the learner's language

INCORRECT USE OF ARTICLES		
Line	Interlanguage Form	Target Language Form
44	see the new country	see new country
45	The new place	new place
55	I make a friends	I made friends
58	we ee study at the college	we ee study at college
60	the life is getting a more routine	life is getting a more routine
85	Kupang is dry islands	Kupang is a dry island
92	their car with the music	their car with music
100	So they choose the cab with –with the hard music	So they choose the cab with –with hard music
134	it is the first experience I touch the snow	it is the first experience I touch snow
135	playing on the snow is quite fun	playing on snow is quite fun
187	Bagong Kusudiarjo is the modern dance	Bagong Kusudiarjo is a modern dance club

(53) Yeah I think when **I was** in senior high school

(64) So the best time *is* when **I was** in the secondary high school

(150) when **I was** kid until I was a teenager I – I *like* to dance traditional

(176) when **I was** ee in a primary school

(193) Until I'm – **I was** in secondary high school

In the case in line 4 '*when I arrived here, I quite – I am quite surprised*, she did not change the form of the *be* even after the subject *I* because she had marked the sentence in the *when-clause*. This point is very fascinating because the past form of *be* never occurs whenever the preceded word is not *I*, such as the words *there* and *it*. The examples are as follows:

(134) **it is** the first experience I touch the snow

(199) when **there is- there is** a celebrate something

Still talking about the pattern *I + marked be*, it is very interesting to compare the answers of similar questions in line 175–176 and line 188–189 below

(175) F: So you took a course?

I: Yeah, when I –when **I was** ee in a primary school, my mother always send me to Bali when - when I have a holiday and I take a course in Bali.

(188) F: Oh so you also took a course in Bagong?

I: Yeah, I - **I join** a club, a dancing club

If we analyse the questions, the structure of the two sentences is almost the same, but the structures in the answers are different. In answering the question in line 175, she could produce past tense structure by using when *I was*. In contrast, she answered the second question in the present tense as she constructs *I + verb*.

Moreover, she also overgeneralized the use of *I was*. She said this in a present sentence like in lines 153–156

'but ee interestingly or ee I don't like a disco. I – I, **I was ashamed** when I, you know, when I move my hand up down, like that [demonstrate the moving hands up and down] without ee (#) you know in the traditional dancing there is ee rule ee (#)'

Instead of saying *I was ashamed* the learner should say *I am ashamed*. It might happen because she had used the phrase *I was* extensively.

Regarding the production of regular and irregular past verb forms, we assume that she has mastery in producing regular verb forms, especially those which are commonly used in daily conversation such as *arrived*, *married*, *visited*, and *completed*. Despite her mastery of regular past verb forms, she did not mark other verbs, such as *expect*, *experience*, *study*, *touch*, *like* and even the past form of third person singular *be* (*was*) (see Table 5). However, we assume that this happens not because she has not known the marked form, but because their positions are not at the beginning of sentences.

Furthermore, in line 59 she said:

(59) and after **I married** it's you know the life is getting ee more routine

We think that although she used the correct marked verb '*married*', the sentence is not an appropriate form. She should say, '*I got married*'. We believe that she might not recognise the word '*married*' as a marked form of past tense. It is a kind of habit transfer in using that word in her experience in her home country. In Indonesia, the word '*married*' is adopted and used in daily conversations without necessarily referring to time signals. People often ask questions such as '*kamu masih single atau sudah married?*' (Are you single or married?) or '*kapan married?*' (When will you get married?). Therefore, the learner does not know that she should add *auxiliary be* or *get* before the word *married*.

Talking about irregular past forms, we can say that she has not mastered this form since there is no evidence on the learner's language that she can produce them (see Table 4). The only irregular past verb form she produced is the word *won* in line 43:

(43) If I **won** \$ 1 million, I *will* travel around the world. I *will* bring my children

In our opinion, she did not realise that the word '*won*' is the past form of '*win*'. Instead, she could construct this irregular form because she just repeated the question. She thought that the question was about the future plan because she continued her sentences by using the word *will* which indicates future activity. The irregularity of past-marked verbs is problematic for Indonesian learners of English as shown in Puspita's study (2021) in which she found that regular and irregular past-marked verbs confused students. The incomplete application of certain rules including tenses is also portrayed in Mashoor and Abdullah (2020).

This learner language might result from the transfer of training. Indonesian has no past tense marker and conveys the past through a context or with an adverb of time. Furthermore, the final consonant sounds required for regular past forms are difficult for Indonesian learners of English to pronounce. Therefore, there is a possibility that the learner has not mastered the regular past forms since she rarely heard correct regular forms during her study of English at school. There is also another possibility that she

actually knows the forms but since she cannot pronounce the final consonant sound, people hear her correct regular past forms as present forms.

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

b. Plural Forms and Articles '*the*' and '*a*'

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

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

(7) **several people** across the street

(28) **Three months**

(37) I will be here for **two years**

In contrast, the learner tended to use singular form of noun when they were preceded by quantifier '*many*'. It can be seen in the following sentences:

(25) **many bus schedule** are you know late and not in time

(85) there are **many dry land** and it's not - the land is not rich.

The learner was completely aware that those sentences were in plural contexts because she used the plural auxiliary '*are*' to indicate that the nouns are plural. Nevertheless, she might assume that whenever she used the word '*many*' she did not have to change the noun into plural form as '*many*' can convey the plural meaning.

Another feature found in this learner language is the connection between the use of article '*the*' and the singular form. It seems that she overused the article '*the*' in her speech. Almost every noun mentioned in her speech was preceded by this article. Moreover, whenever she employed the article '*the*', the following noun is in singular form and the predicate (in this case is auxiliary *be*) was in the singular form as well. This can be seen in almost all utterances involving these two points (article and plural form) like in the following sentences:

(5-6)	the technology <i>is</i> not ee very high
(6)	the ee society ee here I also see that people are ee not discipline
(8)	I see that the people <i>is</i> mostly Asian not the British
(16)	yeah the different <i>is</i> public transport
(16)	Here the public transport <i>is</i> very good
(17)	the service <i>is</i> very- (#) very good
(23)	the bus schedule <i>is</i> very punctual
(43)	I will travel around the world
(54)	it <i>is</i> the most happiest period in my life
(64)	So the best time <i>is</i> when I was in the secondary high school

(continued)

(continued)

(5-6)	the technology <i>is</i> not ee very high
(77)	the island that I have been – I've been – I have been there <i>is</i> just Bali and Madura.
(85)	the – the tree <i>is</i> ee you know there are
(86)	the land <i>is</i> not rich.
(91)	the taxi - the cab there
(96)	music loudly to attract the youngster
(130)	Yeah, for me the most interesting <i>is</i>

Yet, there is one exception in line 8:

(8) yeah I see that **the people** *is* mostly Asian not the British

In this sentence, the learner put article '*the*' together with a plural noun, but it seems that she reckoned this noun as singular because she used the auxiliary '*is*' instead of '*are*' to show that people are plural. It is different from a sentence in line 7 in which she used the word '*people*' added with auxiliary '*are*' to indicate that there was more than one person.

(7) here I also see that **people are** ee not discipline

There is an interesting error made by the learner in sentence line 85. This learner misused the plural form of *island* although at the beginning she used the correct structure *single subject + singular auxiliary be*. We assume that this is because she did not mark the noun with article '*the*'

(85) Kupang *is* dry islands

Furthermore, the wrong production of plural forms such as '*basketballs*' is mainly because of a slip of tongue. We believe that she knows the word '*basketball*' and understands that she is supposed to use the later form.

In the use of article '*the*', she was consistently and correctly using this article to construct a superlative. It can be seen in the following sentences:

(54) it is **the most happiest** period in my life

(64) So **the best time** *is* when I was in the secondary high school

In sentence line 54, the superlative construction is not correct because there is a double superlative marker '*most*' and '*-est*'. Yet, she employed the article correctly to mark the superlative sentence.

In addition to article '*the*', the learner also utilised article '*a*' although it is not as frequent as article '*the*'. She employed article '*a*' in some familiar expressions such as '*when I was in a primary school*', '*I join a club*', '*I have a holiday*', '*I take a course*.' Those expressions are usually drilled at Indonesian secondary schools. Therefore, she automatically employed '*a*' instead of '*the*' for those utterances.

(176) when I was ee in **a primary school**

(177) when I have **a holiday** and I take **a course** in Bali

(189) I join **a club, a dancing club**

The reason why this learner could use appropriate plural forms with numbers and the quantifier '*several*' might be due to the false concept hypothesized by the learner herself. She might not be able to distinguish which quantifiers are followed by either singular or plural nouns. This also happens with the use of articles '*the*' and '*a*'. The learner does not fully understand the distinct use of the two articles. She simplifies the rule of articles and decides to use '*the*' in her speech except in some colloquial expressions as mentioned above. The students' difficulty in mastering articles, particularly for those whose native language does not have articles is also noted in previous studies done by Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman (1999) and Puspita (2021).

5 Conclusion

This interlanguage study of an Indonesian learner of English is carried out through the following four processes: the collection of samples, identification of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors. The analysis of the learner's language which is gathered through an interview with the participant is focused on finding and describing overt errors, especially in grammatical features. We found out that there are three major areas of errors in the learner's language, namely past tenses, plural forms, and articles '*the*' and '*a*'.

In the explanation of errors, we reveal that the source of the learner's errors might be due to the interference of L1, intralingual factors such as overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules in the target language, and failure in comprehending the whole rules. There are also some possibilities that the errors made are evidence of transfer of training, strategies of L2 learning, and communication strategies which enable the learner to communicate quite effectively during the interview.

Despite limitations in the analysis due to the limited number of data, we have identified and elaborated some underlying patterns in the learner's language in each major area of errors. We realise that there are other possibilities for the causes of errors that could be analysed further. Apart from involving more participants for more variety of data, future researchers can make use of the *evaluation of errors* to investigate the effect of errors on learners when they are in the process of mastering English. In doing so, the researchers will be more able to provide comprehensive insights into the significant role of error analysis in English language teaching and learning.

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