

LEXICAL INTERFERENCE MADE BY EFL LEARNERS IN WRITTEN PRODUCTION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the error sentences caused by lexical interference made by English Foreign Language (EFL) learners of IAIN Salatiga in written production. The objectives of this research are to find out type of lexical interference, frequency of each type, the most dominant type, and the factors contribute to language interference in EFL learners' written production. This is a descriptive-qualitative research. The data were taken using elicitation technique and documentation, and then analyzed by using theory of language interference. The findings of this research showed that EFL learners made five types of lexical interference, namely loanword, literal translation for loanword in LI, literal translation in using preposition, literal translation in using adverb of manner, and literal translation in using comparative degree of adjective.

Keywords: *lexical interference, EFL learners, written production*

INTRODUCTION

In learning a foreign language, English Foreign Language (EFL) learners will always encounter some difficulties/problems in mastering it. When they are learning a foreign language, they often make mistakes whether in their speaking or writing. These problems are exactly caused by the different systems of mother tongue and those of foreign language especially English. Foreign language learners sometimes get difficulty in mastering English. It happens because of the interference of first language into English. So, what they find difficult will depend on the degree and maturity of what they have obtained on English. There are many factors which influence the problems in learning English; one of them is because of interference of first language.

As EFL country, Indonesia, English is learnt as the first foreign language. Learning a foreign language requires accuracy, especially when both native and foreign languages have different structure. The differentiation of structure may cause errors or mistakes in learning a foreign language. In learning a foreign language they are usually interfered by the elements of first or native language. Interference happens most of the time, and it has a big role in foreign language learning.

According to Dulay et al (1982: 98) interference is the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Interference is the deviation of target language as a result of their familiarity with more than one language. They differentiate interference into two parts, the psychological and sociolinguistic. The psychological

refers to the influence of old habits when new ones are being learned, whereas sociolinguistic refers to interactions of language when two language communities are in contact.

Solano, et al. (2014) studied about Spanish interference in EFL writing skills: A case of Ecuadorian Senior High Schools. This research focused on native language interference toward English Foreign Language writing skills of Senior High School students in Ecuador. The objects of this research are some Ecuadorian Senior High Schools. There are 351 students and 42 teachers from second year senior high school as participants of this study. The instruments for collecting data are questioners and written test. The students were asked to write a narrative passage. The result showed that most frequent first language interference are misuse of verbs, omission of personal and object pronouns, misuse of prepositions, overuse of articles, and incorrect word order.

Luo (2014) studied about mother tongue interference in pronunciation of college English learning in China. This research focused only on the interference of mother tongue pronunciation. This study examines mispronunciation caused by a mother tongue interference of the college English learners from more than twenty provinces in China. Based on the research findings, it can be known that the result of this study showed that many Chinese college students have problem of mother tongue interference. Many of them would unintentionally confuse the phoneme [n] with [l], or [f] with [h], or the aspirated sounds with the non-aspirated ones in the course of learning English pronunciation, including some teachers who speak their hometown dialects instead of the standard Chinese. Both students and teachers might hardly avoid the mother tongue interference in learning or teaching a foreign language.

Somchai and Sirluck (2013) studied about Thai English Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing errors in different text types: The interference of the first language". They focused their research on EFL students' writing error due to first language interference. Result of this study showed that in narration genre the participants made some interferences of using verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, article, and preposition. While in descriptive writing the participants made some errors in using article, sentence structure, words choice, singular/plural form, and subject-verb agreement. And the last in comparison writing the participants made some errors in using singular/plural form, word choice, article, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, and preposition.

Kaweera (2013) studied about writing error: A review of interlingual and intralingual interference in EFL context. She focused her research on writing errors made by Thai EFL students. Based on the result of the research, she concluded that errors are found in students'

writing caused by both interlingual and intralingual interference. It is clearly understood that writing errors are assumed as being not only a result of the native language interference habits to the learning of second language or foreign language, but also inadequate acquisition of the target language. This is because writers depend on the structures of their own native language and transfer those structures to produce their written language.

There are some definitions of interference promoted by language scholars. The term of interference is firstly used by Weinrich to name the existence of different language system spoken by bilingual speaker in using a language. According to Weinrich (1994: 14) interference is the deviation of language norm in usage as the effect of bilingual toward another language. According to Dulay et al (1982: 98) interference is the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Interference is the deviation of target language as a result of their familiarity with more than one language. They differentiate interference into two parts, the psychological and sociolinguistic.

Meanwhile, according to Hayi (1985:8) referring to Valdman's point of view in 1966 theorized that interference is an obstacle as a result of speaker's habits on first language (L1) in the study of language acquisition of second language (L2). Consequently, there are some transfers of negative elements from the mother tongue into the target language. In other word, the speaker uses negative elements of first language in target language or second language. Nababan (1991: 35) says interference only happens to speakers when they use second or foreign language in their speaking or writing.

While Ellis (1997: 51) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says is the impact that the learner's native language exerts over the acquisition of target language. He asserts that transfer is governed by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in target language learning. He raises the need to distinguish between errors and mistakes and makes an important divergence between the two. He says that errors reflect gaps in the learners' knowledge; they occur because the learners do not figure out what is right. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learners are unable to perform what they know.

Basically, the emergence of interference occurs to the level of bilingual interpreter especially oral interpreter, how far he or she knows and masters source of language and target language well and correctly, and how often he or she uses and changes from one language into another. It causes interference. The main factor of interference is because of the difference of

grammar or structure between source of language or first language and target language or second language (Yusuf, 1994: 70).

Lott (1983: 256) defines interference as errors in the learner's use of the second language or foreign language which can be traced back to the mother tongue or first language. In other word, language learners use the structure of first language in target language. According to Lott (1983: 258 -259) there are three factors that cause language interference, namely interlingual factor, over extension of analogy, and transfer of structure.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive qualitative research. It is about lexical interference made by EFL learners of IAIN Salatiga. Denzin and Lincoln (2012: 4) give definition about qualitative research as follow:

“Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives.”

The definition above means that qualitative research has focus on multi methods that comprise an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. It means that those who conduct a research using qualitative method study the things in their natural setting and try to interpret the meaning based on phenomenon people bring. Qualitative research involves some varieties such as personal experience, introspective, life story, interview and so on to explain about problematic moment and meaning in individuals' lives.

The subject of this research is English Foreign Language (EFL) learners of IAIN Salatiga. They are second semester students. The writer used technique of random sampling. The writer took thirty students randomly, eleven boys and nineteen girls, as the subject of this research. The object of this research is lexical interference made by EFL students in their written production of State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Salatiga. The interference is classified into several types of interference errors. In this research, the data were taken from the wrong sentences because of interference made by English Foreign Language (EFL) students in their English composition. The wrong sentences were taken from students' English composition in the form of essays or

paragraphs on thirty sheets of paper. The data sources were from EFL students' composition of Salatiga State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN).

Having all the data been collected, first the writer displays all the data found in English Foreign Language (EFL) students' composition and then analyzes them by identifying and criticizing the mistakes of the interference. After that he explains and classifies the type of interference. The writer then corrects the mistake based on English rules commonly used in detail. It aims at classifying the types of interference frequently happen in learning a foreign language. The last, the writer draws conclusions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Lexical Interference

Based on the data found in EFL students' written production, in lexical interference, the writer found some errors in the case of cognate, literal translation of cognate in L1, literal translation in using prepositions, literal translation in adverb of manner, and literal translation in comparative degree.

a. Loanword

Loanwords are words that have similar meaning and pronunciation but have different alphabet in two languages English and Indonesian. In other word, the word loanword in language learning is related to the words that have the same pronunciation but different alphabet in both languages first language and target language. Indonesian shares several loanwords that are similar to those of English.

The followings are the examples of interference errors due to cognate made by EFL students in their English composition:

1) IL: I try to aktif

L1: *aktif*

2) IL: There are some organisasi in campus

L1: *organisasi*

All lexical interference above clearly seems that English Foreign Language (EFL) students use first language alphabetical order rather than target language order. At glance in both languages those underlined words above have the same pronunciation. It means first language influences students in learning a foreign language in case of cognate. The first

sentence above should be ‘I try to be active; the second sentence should be ‘there are some organizations in campus’.

b. Literal Translation of Loanword in L1

In English, there are many words that end in *-ion* such as permission, infection, negotiation, etc. They are originally verbs that become noun because of being added suffix *-ion*. These words share loanword with Indonesian words; *permisi*, *infeksi*, and *negosiasi*. In Indonesian, these words can be used both as verbs and nouns. As a result, many Indonesian students as EFL learners make mistake in using those words. The followings are some error of this type made by EFL students as follows:

- 1) IL: We can *interaction* with teacher
L1: *interaksi*
- 2) IL: Many facility must reservation in campus
L1: *reservasi*

The error of this type seems that the learners cannot distinguish the function of word whether it is noun or verb. It happens because they think that those underlined words have similar meaning to words ending in *-si* in their native language that function as verbs. The first sentence above should be ‘we can interact with teacher’, the second sentence should be ‘many facilities must be reserved in campus.

c. Literal Translation in Using Preposition

Prepositions are words that introduce information to the reader. They are normally placed before nouns or pronouns, and normally precede them. Prepositions are essential to sentences because they provide additional and necessary details (Martinet and Thomson, 1986: 91). Prepositions cannot stand alone. They work in groups of words that we call prepositional phrases. A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and ends in a noun. That noun is called the object of the preposition.

Based on the data taken from EFL students’ English composition, the writer found some errors in using prepositions as follows:

- 1) IL: Not all student interested *with* internet
L1: *dengan*
- 2) IL: It is very different *with* my school before
L1: *dengan*

Three prepositions in three sentences above are used inappropriately. EFL learners seemed to translate those prepositions from first language to target language literally. The word *interested* in the first sentence has its own partner of preposition that is *in*. It should be *interested in* not *with*. The use of preposition in the second sentence is inappropriate. It seems that student use his feeling. The word *different* in the second sentence also has its own partner of preposition that is *from*. And the third sentence also has preposition itself namely *of*. The first sentence above should be ‘not all students are interested in internet’, the second sentence should be ‘it is different from my school before’.

d. Literal Translation in Using Adverb of Manner

Adverb of manner in English language tells us about how to do something or how something happens. They are usually placed either after the main verbs or after the objects. Adverbs of manner should always come immediately after verbs that don’t have objects. Many adverbs of manner are generally formed by adding *-ly* to the corresponding adjectives (Martinet and Thomsom, 1986: 47). However, there are some adverbs that don’t end in *-ly* such as *hard*, *fast*, and *well*.

Based on the data found in EFL students’ composition, the writer found some mistakes in using adverbs of manner due to literal translation from first language into target language as follows:

1) IL: We can study in the classroom *with comfortable*

L1: *dengan nyaman*

2) IL: We use internet *with wise*

L1: *dengan bijak*

From the mistakes of using adverb of manners made by EFL students in above sentences are very clear that those mistakes are the result of literal translation from first language into target language. The students just translated literally the word *dengan* into *with*. They didn’t realize that adverb of manner in English consists of one word only. The first sentence above should be ‘we can study in the classroom comfortably’, the second sentence should be ‘we use internet wisely’.

e. Literal Translation in Using Comparative Degree of Adjective

Some English Foreign Language (EFL) learners made mistakes in using degree of comparison. Comparative degree is used to compare one thing to another. It has three levels; positive, comparative, and superlative. The first level, positive, is used for something neutral.

The second level, comparative, is used to compare between two things to state that one of the two things is more or in bahasa Indonesia means *lebih*. For example, “my bag is bigger than your bag”, in bahasa means “*tas saya lebih besar dari tas kamu*”. And the level of superlative is used to compare among many things to state that one of those things is the most or in bahasa is *paling*. For instance, “this book is thickest on the shelf” in bahasa means “*buku ini paling tebal di rak*”.

Based on the data, the writer found some mistakes in using comparative degree due to literal translation made by English Foreign Language (EFL) students as follows:

1) IL: The material from internet *more good*

L1: *lebih bagus*

2) IL: We can *more smart*

L1: *lebih cerdas*

The correct form of the first sentence above should be ‘the material from internet is better’, the second sentence should be ‘we can be smarter’, and the third sentence should be ‘comprehension from a teacher is simpler.

2. Frequency of Each Type of Interference Error Made by EFL Learners of IAIN Salatiga

Having analyzed all the data of interference made by English Foreign Language (EFL) learners of IAIN Salatiga, the writer found five types of interference errors at lexical level. The total numbers of mistakes is 96 as described in the table below:

Table 1: Frequency of Each type of Interference

No	Type of Lexical Interference Error	Example	Frequency	Percentage
1	Loanword	Many people with different <i>karacter</i>	14	14.48%
2	Literal translation for Loanword in L1	We can <i>discussion</i> about material form lecturer	9	9.37%
3	Literal translation in using preposition	Many people are not interested <i>with</i> internet	28	29.16%
4	Literal translation in using adverb of manner	They can use it <i>with good</i>	16	16.66%
5	Literal translation in using comparative	We can <i>more quick</i> understand the	29	30.20%

degree	topic
Total number	96
	100%

Seeing the table above, it can be concluded that English Foreign language (EFL) learners of IAIN Salatiga made five types of errors at lexical interference, namely loanword 14.48%, literal translation for loanword in L1 9.37%, literal translation in using preposition 29.16%, literal translation in using adverb of manner 16.66%, and literal translation in using comparative degree 30.20%.

3. The Most Dominant Type of Interference Error Made by EFL Learners of IAIN Salatiga

Based on the result of data analysis described in table above, it can be concluded that EFL learners of IAIN Salatiga made five types of errors at lexical interference, those are loanword, literal translation of loanword in L1, literal translation in using preposition, literal translation in using adverb of manner, and literal translation in using comparative degree of adjective.

Based on the frequency of each type of interference error shown in the table above, there are five types of errors at lexical interference made by EFL learners of IAIN Salatiga. The most frequent type is literal translation in using comparative degree. It means that the most dominant type of error is literal translation in using comparative degree.

4. Factors Contribute to Language Interference Made by EFL Learners of IAIN Salatiga.

There are many factors contribute to language interference. According to Weinreich (1970) in his study, there are five factors; they are speaker's bilingualism background, disloyalty to target language, limited vocabularies of target language mastered by language learners, need of synonym, and prestige and style. According to Lott (1983) in his research, there are three factors contribute to language interference; they are interlingual error, over extension of analogy, and transfer of structure. While according to Jianhua (2007) there are two factors of language interference; language and cultural differences and modes of thinking. Having analyzed all the data of this research, the writer could draw the conclusion of factors contribute to language interference. Based on the data found in EFL students, and the underlying theory, the writer has assumption about factors contribute to language interference made by EFL students of IAIN Salatiga as follows:

First, some EFL students seem to still have superficial linguistic knowledge since they are still at the beginning of their study. *Second*, students seem to still have limited vocabulary, so they cannot distinguish between verb and noun such. *Third*, some students may have different modes of thinking. Many of EFL students seem to think in Indonesian style when they make English sentences, so many of them made English sentences with Indonesian structure, they used

prepositions by translating literally from first language into target language, they made adverb of manner and comparative degree just by translating literally word by word, and they made English sentences by translating literally from first language into target language word by word. *Fourth*, students are disloyal to the rules of target language.

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed all the data presented in chapter four, the writer found five types of lexical interference errors. The writer found 96 error sentences due to lexical interference made by English Foreign Language (EFL) learners of IAIN Salatiga. The followings are the summary of the research problems:

1. Types of Lexical Interference Error. Based on the result of data analysis, English Foreign Language (EFL) students of IAIN Salatiga made five types of lexical interference error, namely loanword, literal translation of loanword in L1, literal translation in using preposition, literal translation in using adverb of manner, and literal translation in using comparative degree of adjective.
2. Frequency of Each Type of Interference. Having analyzed the data, the writer could draw the conclusion of the frequency of each type of lexical interference error. The total number of interference error is 96. There are five types of lexical interference errors; namely loanword 14.48%, literal translation for loanword in L1 9.37%, literal translation in using preposition 29.16%, literal translation in using adverb of manner 16.66%, and literal translation in using comparative degree 30.20%.
3. The Most Dominant Type of Interference Error. Based on the result of data analysis described in the table of frequency of each type of interference in chapter four, it can be concluded that the most frequent of lexical interference error is literal translation in using comparative degree 30.20%. Thus, the most dominant type is literal translation in using comparative degree
4. Factors Contribute to Language Interference. Having analyzed all the data of this research, the writer could draw the conclusion of factors contribute to language interference. Based on the data found in EFL students and underlying theory, the writer has assumption that factors contributing to language interference made by EFL learners of IAIN Salatiga are as follows:

- a. EFL learners seem to still have superficial linguistic knowledge since they are still in the first year of their study.
- b. Students seem to still have limited vocabulary, even they cannot distinguish between verb and noun such as in *interact* with *interaction*, *discuss* with *discussion*, *communicate* with *communication*, etc.
- c. Some students may have different modes of thinking. Many of EFL learners seem to think in Indonesian style when they make English sentences. As a result, they used prepositions by translating literally from first language into target language, and made adverb of manner and comparative degree just by translating literally word by word.
- d. Students are disloyal to the rules of target language. Many students used the rules of first language in target language. In other word, they used L1 structure in target language.

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