

## **WRITING ERROR: EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE IN EFL CONTEXT**

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### **Abstract**

Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School is one of the boarding school that develops foreign language skills as an attempt to prepare young people to be able to compete in the global world. In fact, the language learners (students) still often mix the structure of their first language into English to write. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the language interference in the students' English writing assignment, and what factors behind them. The research used descriptive qualitative. The results showed that the form of interference in Al- Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School is morphological and syntactical structure. Besides, these interferences are caused by several factors; they are structural and non-structural factors. The structural factors include the difference of linguistics systems in native language and the targeted language. The non-structural factors include the learners' bilingualism, language loyalty, the inadequate vocabulary of learners' language, and the habits of using mother tongue language. This research is expected to provide information to students, teachers, and researchers so that they can find learning innovations that can improve the quality of foreign language skills.

**Keywords:** language interference, report text

### **INTRODUCTION**

More than one billion people speak English either as native language, second language, or even, foreign language. The position of English as an international language makes it a language that must be mastered to interact with other people in the global world. Therefore, the process of learning English has been widely carried out even from an early age. Apart from the formal education environment, the process of learning English has even become an entity that has started to be found in many Islamic boarding schools which incidentally are very closely related to religious subjects and Arabic (Zakiyah et al., 2023). This also happens to Al-Mashduqiyah, a boarding school in East Java which equips students with English and Arabic skills.

In their daily life, Al-Mashduqiyah students have to speak foreign language, either Arabic or English alternately within two weeks. However, in the learning process, many students may produce errors in communicating in foreign languages, either oral or written. (Al-Shalabi, 2021) stated becoming fluent in any foreign language requires a good command of its spoken and written form. The spoken form involves listening and speaking skills, while the written form requires acquiring proper reading and writing skills. Learner's first language interference in both forms of foreign language is unavoidable; it makes the learning process easy when there are similarities or difficult when there are many differences between the systems of the two languages.

Language interference is the negative influence of the first language toward target language learning. It occurs due to the process and result of language system intercommunication in bilingualism conditions (Vavilova et al., 2015). The language interference happens in all language components, such as phonology, morphology and syntax. Weinrich (1953) in (Hikmah et al., 2021) stated Interference which happens in morphology and syntax can be called as grammatical interference. In accordance, (Ekawati, 2018) also concluded that the influence of language 1 pattern to targeted language structure because of its similarity and difference is called grammatical interference. This interference is often

produced by Al-Masduqiyah students in their writing. For example, they write a sentence in P+S order, *So comes a new virus named omicron*. This sentence is likely interfered by Arabic, *ثم جاء فايروس جديد . بسمى أو ميكرون*. Properly, they should write in an English pattern that consists of S+P order, *So the new virus comes named omicron*.

Language interference can be caused by several factors. They are the change of grammar in one language in another language, transfer of grammar from language A to language B, elimination of grammar in one language due to their absence in another language, the change in the grammatical function of one language by the pattern of another language, expansion or narrowing of the use of a grammatical form, and model of given language under the influence of another language (Turdaliyevich, 2022). Therefore, global interference is influenced by another language.

A number of researches have been conducted to study the influence of L1 interference on the targeted language. A study conducted by (Ekawati, 2018) found that the exchange college students still experienced grammatical interference in Indonesian speech. She stated that the student might produce errors in speaking. Not only speaking, (Al-Saggaf et al., 2022) added language error also happens in writing. He explained that students with limited vocabulary and lack of systematic grammar can easily produce language interference in English writing. Al-Saggaf conducted research that aims to explore the effect of language interference on students' writing. Those previous studies were focused on grammatical interference in students' communication and its effect on writing. However, the language interference not only happens in speaking, it might also find in writing. Therefore, this study focused on exploring language interference in students' writing and the factors behind it. Hopefully, this study can help the students to be more aware of their errors in using English. Besides, it is also expected to help the teachers in providing a reference to the areas of language interference.

## **METHOD**

This research used qualitative method. Qualitative research is a research using participant observation or case studies methods that result in narrative report (Parkinson and Drislane in (Guest et al., 2013)). The researcher employed a qualitative research methodology to gain insight into the phenomenon exists currently. It attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, and provides information (Kumar, 2018). Commonly, it uses interview, observation, documentation, and survey to collect the data (Nassaji, 2015). Therefore, it was selected because the researcher analysed, described, and interpreted the situation, problem, and phenomenon which exist currently.

### ***Subject of the Research***

The subject of the research is 27 ninth grade students of Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School in the academic year 2021/2022. The data were taken from their writing tasks. After that, 16 students were interviewed to explore the factors behind the language interference results. The data collected on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023, Patokan, Kraksaan, Probolinggo.

### ***Instrument of the Research***

In qualitative research, the researcher is a key instrument (Creswell, 2014). The researcher collects the data himself through examining the documents to identify the types of interference namely 27 papers of students' English writing of report text, and interviewing 16 participants to know the factor that caused the interference namely Al-Mashduqiah Plus junior high school students. Therefore, the researcher is the one who gathers the information through documentation, interviews and interprets the data in this study.

### ***The Procedure of Collecting the Data***

In this research, the first technique of collecting the data is documentation. To gather the data, the researcher collected the data from 27 students' English writing of report text at the ninth-grade students of Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School. This writing is a part of students' assignment. They were asked to write a report text based on the syllabus. To know the factor behind the students' grammatical interference, the researcher interviewed 16 of ninth grade students at Al-Mashduqiah Plus

Junior High School to identify the factors that caused them got grammatical interference in their English writing assignment of report text.

### ***Technique of Data Verification***

The crucial thing in a research is validity. The researcher needs several techniques to validate the data. In this research, the researcher used Triangulation to make sure the data were accurate or valid. This study used theoretical or perspective triangulation to triangulate or support the data on the finding in agreement and validity. It examines the research problem of this study from multiple perspectives or theories to support the overcoming of single theory study. Therefore, the researcher used more than one theory or perspective to interpret and discuss the data. The researcher compared the data of the study with multiple theories or perspectives on the finding. Those theories are collaborating and are compared with the finding of the data set in this study. Thereby, the validity of this study results is dependable.

### ***The Technique of Analyzing Data***

This study analyzed the data using two main distinct steps namely identification and clarification processes (James, 1998). Identification process was designed to identify every incorrect sentence. In this stage, the researcher used an error analysis technique. The researcher read and analyzed the students' English writing. Meanwhile, the clarification process was designed to clarify and category the interference sentence into grammatical interference aspects, both morphology and syntax. In this stage, the researcher used contrastive analysis techniques. The researcher compared the languages in order to find whose language structure is used. Finally, the researcher displayed and described the data based on the structural differences and similarities of the two languages or more.

In addition, the researcher classified the grammatical interference of students' writing into several factors. Those are structural and non-structural factors. The structural factors include the difference of linguistics systems in native language and the targeted language. The non-structural factors include the learners' bilingualism, language loyalty, the inadequate vocabulary of learners' language, synonymy necessity, language pride, and the habits of using mother tongue language. Finally, the researcher displayed and described the data that was analyzed and classified based on the structural and non-structural language interference factors.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Types of Language Interference**

The following are the lists of language interference that emerged in students' English writing assignment at the ninth-grade students of Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School. The researcher classified the types of language interference into syntax and morphology.

#### ***Syntax***

##### **1. Word Order**

Based on the analysis data, there were some sub-indicators in the element of syntax. The sub-indicators of syntactical interference are including of word order, verb omission, omission of the subject pronoun, passive voice, subject pronoun used as a redundant element, adjectival modifiers placed after noun, formation of no or not without the auxiliary do, disagreement of subject and verb person, use of wrong to be, and noun phrase. For more explanation, the researcher classified the interference based on the interference type described below:

**Table 1. language Interference in Word Order**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Interference Identification</b>	<b>Language Interference</b>
1	<i>Plate is place for eating we everyday</i>	Piring adalah tempat makan kita setiap hari

2	<i>The voice they</i>	Suara mereka صوتهم
3	<i>We are not can for touch it</i>	Kita tidak bisa menyentuhnya نحن لانستطيع ان لا يمسه
4	<i>The whiteboard we can buy in builder store</i>	Papan tulis kita bisa membeli di toko pembangunan
5	<i>Come I new Virus named by Omicron Virus</i>	Setelah itu datang I firus yang dinamakan Omikron ثم جا فايروس جديد بسم او مكرون
6	<i>In this world hit corona virus</i>	Di dunia ini menimbulkan derita virus korona في هذا الدنيا اصاب كورون فيروس
7	<i>So cow know many have of fermer in the home</i>	Jadi sapi sekerang banyak yang memiliki di rumah
8	<i>He not will to eat the grass</i>	Dia tidak ingin makan rumput هو لا يريد ان ياكل العسى
9	<i>Animal is so beatiful the butterfly</i>	Hewan sangat cantik kupu-kupu فراسة هي حيوان الذى جميلة
10	<i>Food them is meat</i>	Makanan mereka adalah daging
11	<i>Cat animal humble</i>	Kucing adalah hewan yang rendah hati القط هو حيوان متواضع

The interference of this case is commonly due to permutation. The sentences come in P+S order. **Table 1** student 1 the sentence structure is interfered with by Indonesian because of literal translation. The student wrote the predicate before the object pronoun. Indonesian structure comes in S+P order. Because of permutation, the sentence structure is being exchanged. The sentence should be that *the plate is a place for eating every day*. **Table 1** student 2 is likely interfered by two languages. They are Indonesian and Arabic. Both languages have quite equal writing that influences students' English writing. Besides, English is different. It needs the possessive adjective to state the belonging that place before the noun. The students wrote the subject pronoun after the noun. The sentence should be *their voice*.

Table 1 student 3 is also getting interference that is influenced by students' bilingualism. They are Indonesian and Arabic. Both are the main factors that interfere with their English. Because Indonesian and Arabic have the similar writing of *tidak bisa* - لانستطيع, students write into *not can* to suit their knowledge of languages. Wherein, English is different. The word not is placed after modal auxiliary to express the negative sentence. The sentence should be *we cannot touch it*. **Student 4**'s sentence structure is interfered with by Indonesian. The sentence consisted of the subject pronoun after the object. It has the same discussion with the above occurrence. The sentence should be *we can buy the whiteboard in the building store*.

**Student 5**'s sentence is coming in P+S order as well. Actually, Indonesian and English have the same structure S+P order. Because of permutation, students wrote in P+S order. But Arabic is a language that write the sentence differently. Its sentence consists of P+S order (fiil madhi) and S+P (fiil mudhari'). The sentence should be *one new virus comes named Omicron*. **Student 6** also has the same discussion about predicate and subject order. The sentence is coming in predicate before subject pronoun. In addition, the word hit is transitive verb that needs an object but the sentence does not. The sentence is interested by Indonesian and Arabic structure. Whereas, Indonesian is due to permutation and Arabic *fiil maadi* that consists of P+S. The sentence should be *Coronavirus hits this world*.

Student 7 is a random arrangement. It is arranged in unstructured sentence due to Indonesian literal translation. The sentence also comes in predicate and subject order. The sentence should be *so now, many farmers have the cow in the home*. Student 8 got the same

discussion with student 3 that explains the negative form placed before modal auxiliary. That sentence is interfered by Arabic and Indonesian. The sentence should be *he will not eat the grass*. Student 9's sentence interfered with Indonesian and Arabic. In Arabic, an adjective is placed after the noun to modify the quality of the noun itself. Differing from English, the adjective is coming before noun as the modifier. The sentence should be *the beautiful animal is butterfly*. Student 10 the sentence structure is quite similar to the discussion with student 2 that interfered with Indonesian and Arabic structure. In the sentence, the possessive adjective of the pronoun is coming after the noun. In English, a possessive adjective is placed before a noun. The sentence should be *their food is meat*. Student 11 is interfered with by Indonesian and Arabic structure. The sentence is an adjective that comes after a noun. Wherein, an adjective is modifying the quality of a noun that is placed before the noun itself. The sentence should be *the cat is the humble animal*. Student 12 is the unstructured sentence. The sentence is similar to discussion with Student 3 that the sentence placed the word not before modal auxiliary can to suit with the student's intention. It is absolutely interfered with by Indonesian and Arabic. Whereas, both languages do not have auxiliary. The sentence should be *the dog cannot be eaten*.

## 2. Verb Omission

**Tabel 2. Syntactic Interference in Verb Omission**

Code	Interference Identification	Language Interference
12	<i>He not animal of pet</i>	Dia bukan hewan peliharaan
13	<i>Store mable more in Pasuruan</i>	Toko mebel lebih banyak di pasuruan
10	<i>Cat animal humble</i>	Kucing adalah hewan yang rendah hati القط هو حيوان متواضع
14	<i>The elephant is an animal four footed</i>	Gajah adalah hewan berkakiempat
15	<i>They karnivora animal</i>	Mereka binatang karnivora

The interference of this case is verb omission or the absence of auxiliary or helping and main verbs. Student 12's interference is interfered by Indonesian and Arabic with the absence of *to be or helping verbs*. The sentence is a nominal or non-verbal sentence that needs an auxiliary, namely to be *-is* instead of verb. Indonesian and Arabic have no auxiliary. Hence, both languages influence students' English writing. The sentence should be that *he is not a pet*. Student 13's sentence is getting the same discussion, it is interfered with by Indonesian and Arabic. The sentence is a nominal or non-verbal sentence that has an absence of auxiliary or helping verb namely *-is*. It is because Indonesian and Arabic sentences have nothing auxiliary in any kind of sentence. Thus, those languages influenced students' English writing. They should write *many furniture stores in Pasuruan*.

In line with that, Student 10 is also similar to the discussion above. It is likely to be interfered by Indonesian and Arabic. This sentence is a nominal or non-verbal sentence that lacks a helping verb or *tobe* namely *-is*. The sentence should be *cat is the humble animal*. Student 14 is interfered with by Indonesian structure. The sentence is using a helping verb. However, the sentence above is omitting the base-verb as the main verb exists in the sentence. Besides, the word *footed* is misused because *foot* is not a verb that has final *-ed* for simple past tense but it is a noun. The sentence should be *the elephant is an animal that has four feet*.

Student 15's sentence has no auxiliary that is commonly used in nominal or non-verbal sentences. The sentence is interfered with by Indonesian because it does not have an auxiliary. The student wrote the sentence without any kind of verbs either base or helping verbs. The sentence should be *they are carnivore animal*.

### 3. Omission of the Subject Pronoun

**Table 3. Syntactic Interference in Omission of The Subject Pronoun**

Code	Interference Identification	Language Interference
1	<i>In the market much buy plate</i>	Di pasar banyak yang membeli piring
1	<i>More use the plate for eat</i>	Banyak menggunakan piring untuk makan
16	<i>The foot is eat grass</i>	Makanannya yaitu makan rumput
17	<i>In Indonesia more make table</i>	Di Indonesia banyak yang membuat meja

The interference of this case is the absence or omission of subject pronoun. Student 1's sentence has no subject. The sentence is interfered with by Indonesian that no subject pronoun exists in. Besides, Indonesian patterns consist of S+P but the sentence does not. In addition, the word *much* is mis-formation. It is used for non-count nouns but the word *people* is count-noun. It should use *many* or *some* instead of *much*. The sentence should be *many people buy the plate in the market*. In table 3, student 1 is an equal discussion above that interfered with Indonesian. The sentence does not have the subject pronoun. In addition, the verb after *for* should have the suffix *-ing* as a noun. The sentence should be *more people use the plate for eating*. Student 16's sentence is completely interfered by Bahasa Indonesia due to literal translation. The sentence is an omission of subject pronoun as the sentence pattern. The sentence should be *they eat the grass as their food or their food is the grass*. Student 17 is in a similar discussion with Student 1 in Table 3 that absence of its subject in the sentence due to Indonesian interference. Besides, Indonesian patterns consist of S+P but the sentence does not. The word *more* is used for comparative adjectives that compare two things differently. It should use *many* or *some* instead of *more* exactly. The sentence should be *in Indonesia, many people make the table*.

The interference occurs in the sentence, even the paragraph. It shows the sentence involves syntactic interference if one of the sentence structures is absorbed by another sentence structure and it usually produces an error. Besides, syntactical interference refers to unstructured sentence stated by (Gulö, 2019). It is also the same finding with the previous study that conducted by (Tarukallo et al., 2017). Syntactic interference refers to agreement rules. Those theories are collaborating and supporting the same finding.

### Morphology

Based on the data analysis, it was found that most students often over-generalize the morphological form of L1 into L2. It means that they create a similar structure of L1 and L2. The data are categorised into literal translation, third person singular incorrect, reduplication, and misspelling. For more explanation, the researcher described below:

#### 1. Literal Translation

student 4 : *The whiteboard there is some large, from the short, until the big.*

student 6 : *He have coloured yellow and white in he body*

student 21 : *Tiger is animal konsumer meat can we callkarnifores*

The interference of this case is literal translation. Student 4 is interfered by Bahasa Indonesia *Papan tulis putih ada beberapa ukuran, dari yang kecil hingga yang besar*. The sentence is arranged literally. The sentence should be *there are many size of whiteboards, from small to big size*. Student 6 has the same case. It is interfered by Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic. Moreover, the sentence used *he* instead of *his* as the possessive adjective. The sentence should be *he has the yellow and white colour in his body*. Student 21 is interfered by Indonesian due to literal translation as well. The sentence should be *tiger is a carnivorous animal that consume a meat*.

## 2. Third Person Singular Incorrect

student 21: *Tiger have four foots and have a long fingernail*

student 24: *Sheep have two kelamin*

student 8: *The cow big have tail*

The interference of this case is the third person singular incorrect. Student 21's sentence is interfered by Indonesian structure. The sentence uses an inappropriate verb to agree with the third person singular pronoun. Wherein, in Indonesian, there is no different particular usage of verbs for first, second, and third person. They are all the same. Differing from English, English has different usage of subject and verb agreement in first, second, and third person. This sentence is a disagreement between the subject and its verb. The sentence should be *tiger has four feet and long fingernails*. Student 24's sentence is also interfered by Indonesian. The word *have* is not appropriate usage for third person singular. The sentence should be *sheep has two pairs*. Student 8 is interfered by Indonesian and Arabic. It has the same discussion above. The sentence used the verb agree with the subject pronoun in third person singular incorrect. The sentence should be *the big cow has a tail*.

## 3. Reduplication

Student 19 : *The shark fish they can eat the fish other* (Ikan hiu bisa memakan ikan lainnya)

The interference of this case is reduplication. Wherein, there are many subject pronouns in the sentence used. Student 19 is interfered by Indonesian structure. The sentence used many subjects of pronouns to emphasise its position but it is wrong because of redundant. The sentence should be *the shark can eat the other fish*.

## 4. Misspelling

student 9 : *Foot them is meat* (Makanan mereka adalah daging)

student 15 : *They karnivora animal* (Mereka adalah hewan karnivora)

The interference of this case is misspelling. Student 9's sentence is interfered by Indonesian and Arabic. It is misspelling the word *foot* instead of *food*. The sentence also used the object of pronoun to express the possessive adjective that placed before noun. The sentence should be *their food is meat*. Student 15's sentence is also interfered by Indonesian due to misspelling of the word of *carnivore*. The sentence mis-spelled in the first and last of the letter. The sentence should be *they are carnivore animal*.

Based on the data analysis, it was found that most of the students often over-generalize the morphological form of L1 into L2. It means that they create a similar structure of L1 and L2. The data are categorized into literal translation, third person singular incorrect,

reduplication, and misspelling. The morphological interference types involve literal translation due to the habit of using mother tongue language, third person singular incorrect due to the use of first, second, and third person differing from Indonesian and Arabic when they are attached to verbs, reduplication due to the use of many subject of pronouns or the word that has the similar meaning, and misspelling due to the influence of another language.

### **Factors of Language Interference**

The Language interference of Indonesian and Arabic in students' English writing assignments are influenced by several factors. They are structural and non-structural factors. The structural factors include the difference of linguistics systems in native language and the targeted language. The non-structural factors include the learners' bilingualism, language loyalty, the inadequate vocabulary of learners' language, synonymy necessity, language pride, and the habits of using mother tongue language. The result of interview to 16 participants of Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School as follows:

Table 4. Interview Result

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Type of Factor</b>
Student 1	The difference of linguistic system in native language and the target language	Structural
Student 2	Learners' bilingualism	Non-structural
Student 3	The difference of linguistic system in native language and the target language	Structural
Student 4	The inadequate vocabulary of learners' language	Non-structural
Student 5	The habits of using mother tongue language	Non-structural
Student 6	Learners' bilingualism	Non-structural
Student 7	The habits of using mother tongue language	Non-structural
Student 8	The inadequate vocabulary of learners' language	Non-structural
Student 9	The habits of using mother tongue language	Non-structural
Student 10	The difference of linguistic system in native language and the target language	Structural
Student 11	Learners' bilingualism	Non-structural
Student 12	Language loyalty	Non-structural
Student 13	The inadequate vocabulary of learners' language	Non-structural
Student 14	The habits of using mother tongue language	Non-structural
Student 15	The difference of linguistic system in native language and the target language	Structural
Student 16	The habits of using mother tongue language	Non-structural

The grammatical interferences of Indonesian and Arabic into students' English writing assignments are influenced by several factors based on the theory. They are structural and non-structural factors. The structural factors include the difference of linguistics systems in native language and the targeted language; it is due to the difference of one and another language system, even the structure. The non-structural factor includes the learners' bilingualism due to the students stayed in bilingual environment, language loyalty due to the students' language knowledge, the inadequate vocabulary of learners' language due to students do not master a lot of vocabularies, and the habits of using mother tongue language due to students actually cannot refrain from their first language.



## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the overall description and analysis of grammatical interference in students' English writing assignment of report text of Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School, it can be concluded that the types of language interferences in students' English writing assignment of report text are morphological and syntactic aspects. The syntactical aspect involves the word order, verb omission, omission of the subject pronoun. Furthermore, the morphological aspect involves literal translation, third person singular incorrect, reduplication, and misspelling. Furthermore, the factors behind the grammatical interference of students' English writing assignment of report text of Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School used by the students involve learners' bilingualism, language loyalty, the inadequate vocabulary of learners' language, and the learners' habit in using mother tongue language. Based on the interview conducted on Al-Mashduqiah Plus Junior High School students, these factors have a big impact on the occurrence of grammatical interference in students' English writing. Finally, this study is not awfully perfect. Hence, further researchers are suggested to conduct or analyze deeply about the other sides of this research, because this research studies the syntactical and morphological interference with the factors behind them. The further researchers could analyze more about them deeply.

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