

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Writing skills, particularly in the process of English language learning at the junior high school level, still present frequent and recurring errors made by students. It is undeniable that writing is one of the most difficult skills to master, as students often perceive English as being similar to Indonesian. This assumption leads them to believe that the grammar, structure, and other linguistic aspects of English mirror those of Indonesian.<sup>1</sup> One such case can be seen at Al-Mashduqia Plus Junior High School, as reported in a study conducted by Durratul Hikmah and Irfan Wahyudi. Their research revealed prominent patterns of errors in student writing, particularly in morphological aspects, such as literal translation, incorrect third-person singular verb forms, reduplication, and misspelling, as well as syntactic aspects, including word order, verb omission, and omission of subject pronouns.<sup>2</sup> Similar errors can be observed in many other schools across Indonesia.

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<sup>1</sup> Puspita, "Error Analysis Of Indonesian Grammatical Interference In Students' English Composition," *Buletin Poltanesa* 22, no. 1 (June 2, 2021): 101–109, <http://e-journal.politanisamarinda.ac.id/index.php/tanesa/article/view/466>.

<sup>2</sup> Durratul Hikmah and Irfan Wahyudi, "Writing Error: Exploring the Language Interference in EFL Context," *International Journal of English Education and Linguistics (IJoEEL)* 5, no. 1 (2023): 146–155.

Some of the most common mistakes made by students include incorrect sentence structures, such as writing active sentences as passive (or vice versa). Another frequent error is word-for-word translation from Indonesian to English.<sup>3</sup> This is especially common in writing tasks, where students translate Indonesian texts literally and assemble sentences without fully understanding the meanings and grammatical usage of the words. A final but widespread issue is the misuse of tenses, often caused by students' lack of knowledge regarding the many forms and rules of English tenses. For example, in the sentence, "*I go to Grandma's house yesterday*," the use of present tense (*go*) is incorrect given the past time indicator (*yesterday*). The correct sentence should be, "*I went to grandma's house yesterday*."

These errors are not accidental or random; rather, they are systematic and frequently found across various student writing tasks. This has been consistently confirmed by multiple previous studies, which highlight a significant number of errors. Research analysing more than one text type, such as narrative, descriptive, and contrast writing, shows that word choice, article use, and sentence structure errors occur at consistently high rates.<sup>4</sup> This indicates that students make similar errors repeatedly in their writing. In another study, a high frequency of lexical interference was observed, 51 occurrences across 29 students, further confirming

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<sup>3</sup> Ibnu Hajar, Kisman Salija, and Andi Muliati, "The Interference of Indonesian on The Students' English Writing of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar" (2022).

<sup>4</sup> Somchai Watcharapunyawong and Siriluck Usaha, "Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language," *English Language Teaching* 6, no. 1 (2013): 67–78.

the systematic nature of these errors rather than attributing them to individual carelessness.<sup>5</sup>

One of the main causes of these persistent errors is language interference. Language interference refers to the influence of a learner's first language (L1) on their acquisition and use of a target language.<sup>6</sup> In the context of foreign language learning in Indonesia, this means interference from Indonesian. Such interference occurs when students subconsciously apply Indonesian language rules to their English writing. This might include improper use of grammar, sentence structures, vocabulary, or even pronunciation patterns based on Indonesian, which are then reflected in writing. Previous research has shown that interference arises because students tend to apply Indonesian grammar when writing in English. However, Indonesian and English have fundamentally different grammar rules.<sup>7</sup> For instance, Indonesian does not have different verb forms to indicate past, present, and future tenses, unlike English. Other causes of interference, as found in earlier studies, include students' habit of using Indonesian, assuming their sentences are correct, carelessness, and literal word-for-word translation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A D E Yunita Annisah, "EFL Students' Interlingual and Intralingual Interference in Writing Target Language" (State Institute For Islam Studies (IAIN), 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Larry Selinker, "Interlanguage," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 3 (2007): 209–231.

<sup>7</sup> Puspita, "Error Analysis Of Indonesian Grammatical Interference In Students' English Composition."

<sup>8</sup> Eka Sasmiasih, "Error Analysis on the Students Writing of Descriptive Text ( A Case Study at Second Grade Students of SMP PGRI 2 Ciputat)," 2014.

This phenomenon is not limited to junior high school students; it is a widespread issue affecting English learning at all levels of education in Indonesia, from elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, to higher education. Language interference is also present in non-formal education settings such as language courses (e.g., Kumon, Pelita Indonesia). While it is generally believed that higher levels of education lead to better language ability, prior studies have shown that interference errors persist even among university students.<sup>9</sup> One such study identified 82 instances of interference in students' writing, highlighting the broad impact of this issue on the national level.<sup>10</sup>

Errors caused by Indonesian interference can hinder students' ability to express their ideas effectively in English. When writing, students may wonder whether their sentence structures are correct, whether they have used the appropriate vocabulary, and whether their message will be clearly understood by the reader. Such interference can lead to miscommunication between writer and reader. It also affects spoken communication, influencing intonation and word stress. Furthermore, it impacts students' academic performance in exams or written tasks and may lower their confidence in using English actively.

Writing in English is a vital skill in today's globalised world. English is widely used as a means of international communication. Many non-native

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<sup>9</sup> Ayu Rizki Septiana, "The Indonesian Grammatical Interference on EFL Students' Writing," *Journal of Research on English and Language Learning (J-REaLL)* 1, no. 1 (2020): 46.

<sup>10</sup> Annisah, "EFL Students' Interlingual and Intralingual Interference in Writing Target Language."

countries prioritise English due to its vast benefits in social, business, and educational contexts.<sup>11</sup> Socially, English allows individuals to connect globally; in business, companies seek professionals not only with technical skills but also with English proficiency. In education, English acts as a bridge to broader knowledge. For instance, pursuing scholarships or studying abroad requires English competence, as Indonesian alone will not suffice. Thus, mastering English is essential. In both academic and professional settings, strong writing ability in English is a key indicator of communicative competence.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, it is important to analyse the types of errors found in students' writing, especially those caused by language interference, whether interlingual or intralingual. Few studies have thoroughly mapped out interference errors based on specific categories or directly linked them to typical features of Indonesian. Additionally, expert opinions on these writing errors remain limited. This study aims to offer a systematic analysis of these errors while involving expert validation to ensure the findings' reliability. By understanding the nature and causes of students' errors, educators can design more effective instructional strategies to reduce Indonesian interference in English writing.

Based on the description above, this study aims to conduct an error analysis of the effect of Indonesian interference in the writing of 8th-grade students in SMPN 2 Balaraja school. Following the title of this research, which

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<sup>11</sup> Annisah, "EFL Students' Interlingual and Intralingual Interference in Writing Target Language."

<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach Writing* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2004).

is “**An Error Analysis Of Indonesian Interference In Students' English Writing,**” this research is expected to successfully explain information about the errors made by students in SMPN 2 Balaraja, so that it can be the main step for educators to design more targeted learning strategies.

### **B. Identification of Problem**

Referring to the background of the problem, several key issues can be identified:

1. Students still rely on Indonesian rules when writing texts in English.
2. Students sometimes forget English rules when writing texts in English.
3. Students have difficulty writing vocabulary well.

### **C. Research Question**

Based on the problem above, the problem can be identified as follows:

1. What types of Indonesian interference appear in students' English writing?
2. How do Students perceive their Indonesian interference in English writing?

### **D. Objective of Study**

According to the Research Questions, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the type of Indonesian interference that appears in students' English writing.
2. To know the cause of Indonesian interference from the students' point of view.

### **E. Limitations of Study**

This study examines the first language interference made by eighth-grade students in their writing, focusing on 2 types of first language interference they

are Interlingual interference (Phonological interference, orthographical interference, lexical interference, grammatical interference) and Intralingual interference (Over-generalization, Ignorance of Rules Restriction, Incomplete Application of Rules, Fales Concept Hypothesized). Understanding these errors is crucial for educators aiming to enhance students' writing proficiency.

#### **F. Significance of Study**

This research is expected to make a scientific contribution in the academic field, especially for those who want to understand the types of interference that occur due to Indonesian interference in eighth-grade students' writing. The results of this study are expected to provide benefits for all parties involved, among others:

1. For Students: This research is expected to benefit students who read it so that they can avoid language interference when writing texts in English. In addition, this research is expected to raise their awareness to avoid interference and improve their writing skills.
2. For Educators, this study can assist teachers in improving their teaching strategies and paying attention to the language interference frequently made by students. This will be feedback for them to assess the success of the teaching methods that have been applied.
3. For Researchers, this research is expected to increase the researchers' knowledge and competence in compiling scientific writing. As a

prospective teacher, this study also helps researchers to better understand the language interference made by students in their writing.

4. For other Researchers, this study can be a reference for other researchers who want to conduct a similar study regarding the analysis of language interference in student writing. Hopefully, this research can be used as one of the reference sources in their research.

## **G. Previous Study**

Several studies have been conducted by previous researchers on language interference in writing.

First, from Puspita, with the title “Error Analysis of Indonesian Grammatical Interference in Students' English Composition,” this study found that the most dominant type of language interference is grammatical interference comprises morphological errors ( Tense: 34%, Articles: 16%, Pronouns:7%, Singular/plural:17%, Prepositions: 5%) and syntactical errors ( Word Order: 15%, Agreement: 5%, Negation: 2%), these areas of language that students encountered when conducting composition in English. The researcher only focuses on errors that are related to Indonesia as L1 interference.<sup>13</sup>

Second, Ibnu Hajar et al, with the title “ The Interference of Indonesian on the Students' English Writing of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar.” This study shows that Indonesian interference influenced students' English writing,

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<sup>13</sup> Puspita, “Error Analysis Of Indonesian Grammatical Interference In Students' English Composition.”

mainly due to differences in grammatical rules, particularly in forming non-verbal sentences. A total of 50 errors were identified, consisting of omission, misformation, and disordering types based on surface strategy taxonomy. Omission errors dominated, followed by misformation and disordering errors, involving issues such as grammatical morphemes, tense misuse, subject-verb disagreement, and constituent misplacement. The causes of errors varied between L1 (Indonesian) interference and non-L1 interference, with each group of students experiencing different challenges in each error type.<sup>14</sup>

Third, there is another research conducted by Ade Yunita Annisah entitled “EFL Students’ Interlingual and Intralingual Interference in writing Target Language.” This study found that six type of interference 1) ortographical interference consist of 14 cases(10.14%), (2) lexical interference consist of 51 cases (36.96%), (3) grammatical interference consist of 46 cases (33.33%), (4) over-generalization consist of 8 cases (5.8%), (5) ignorance of rules restrictions consist of 18 cases (13.04%), and (6) false concept hypothesized consist of 1 case (0.72%) which is still many students make the mistake in their writing. Researcher also the factor of the interference students make, 1) less consideration in multiple meaning (71.7%), 2) partial understanding of English rules (69.81%), 3) hard to distinguish the target language rules (67.92%), 4) often misanalyzing

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<sup>14</sup> Hajar, Salija, and Muliati, “The Interference of Indonesian on The Students’ English Writing of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar.”

the target language (66.04%), 5) translating ideas word for word (64.15%), 6) substitute letters unintentionally (64.15%).<sup>15</sup>

A study conducted by Elchin Mirzayev (2024) examined the impact of first language (L1) interference on the writing skills of students learning English as a Foreign Language (ESL). This study focused on how negative transfer from the participants' native languages, particularly Arabic and Mandarin, affected grammar, vocabulary, and discourse structure in English writing. Through case studies, this research identified recurring errors caused by L1 interference and emphasised the need for pedagogical strategies to minimise these errors. The study also highlighted the importance of increasing learners' awareness of such interference, using targeted teaching techniques, and providing consistent practice with authentic English writing to improve learners' proficiency and reduce the influence of their native language.<sup>16</sup>

Next, the previous study, A study conducted in class X of Athirah Bone High School examined the Impact of Language Disturbances in English Writing Classes by Mulyana et al, (2020). This study aimed to identify two main aspects: (1) the types of errors made by students in their writing skills, and (2) the factors that caused students to experience disturbances in writing. Using a qualitative approach through interviews, this study involved nine students as samples. The

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<sup>15</sup> Annisah, "EFL Students' Interlingual and Intralingual Interference in Writing Target Language."

<sup>16</sup> Elchin Mirzayev, "The Influence of First Language Interference on ESL Writing Skills," *EuroGlobal Journal of Linguistics and Language Education* 1, no. 1 (2024): 33–39.

results revealed five types of student perceptions related to errors: emotional responses to writing, the influence of the first language on second language proficiency, previous experiences and types of interference that occur in writing, factors causing interference, and difficulties in writing. In addition, four main factors contributing to interference were identified: lack of spelling proficiency, confusion in the use of articles, omission of singular and plural forms, and spacing errors. This study highlights the complex nature of language interference in students' English writing performance.<sup>17</sup>

The last one, A study conducted in the Thai EFL context, reviewed the theoretical concepts of interlingual and intralingual interference in students' English writing. The research focused on identifying and classifying errors stemming from the mother tongue (Thai) as interlingual interference, covering lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels and errors resulting from intralingual factors such as false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence restrictions, hypercorrection, and overgeneralization. By examining these error sources, the study aimed to highlight the patterns of interference that commonly occur among Thai EFL learners. Additionally, the research provided pedagogical implications for

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<sup>17</sup> Mulyana Mulyana, Muhammad Zuhri Dj., and Andi Muhammad Yauri, "Language Interference in EFL Writing Class," *International Journal of Research on English Teaching and Applied Linguistics* 1, no. 2 (2021): 92–107.

teaching English in foreign language contexts, emphasising the need for error-awareness strategies to improve students' writing proficiency.<sup>18</sup>

Compared to the previous studies, this research has some similarities but also has key differences. First, the similarity between this study and Puspita's study is that both investigate grammatical interference; however, the difference is that while Puspita's study exclusively addresses L1 interference in morphological and syntactic errors which is only focus in Grammatical Interference, this study takes a broader approach, Interlingual interference (Phonological interference, orthographical interference, lexical interference, grammatical interference) and Intralingual interference (Over-generalization, Ignorance of Rules Restriction, Incomplete Application of Rules, Fales Concept Hypothesized). Then, Mirzayev's (2024) study emphasised negative transfer from Arabic and Mandarin in grammar, vocabulary, and discourse, while the Athirah Bone High School research (2020) explored both types of errors and students' perceptions of interference, showing affective and cognitive dimensions of the issue. Similarly, the Thai EFL context study highlighted interlingual and intralingual interference at lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels. These studies are comparable to this research, which also investigates language interference by classifying types of errors using Selinker's theory of interlingual and intralingual interference.

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<sup>18</sup> Watcharapunyawong and Usaha, "Thai EFL Students' Writing Errors in Different Text Types: The Interference of the First Language."

Another research, similar to Ibnu Hajar's research, uses a qualitative approach; however, Ibnu Hajar's research mainly identifies errors only in grammatical interference, misformation (tense and concord), omission (number maker & content morphemes), and disordering ( wrong place of modifiers). While this research explores interference at a more nuanced level through a case study of students at SMPN 2 Balaraja, grade 8<sup>th</sup>, which focuses specifically on intralingual and interlingual interference. And the last, Ade Yunita Annisah's research, both emphasise the types of intralingual and interlingual interference. The difference with this research is that it uses a qualitative approach, while Ade Yunita's research uses a quantitative approach. Another difference is that this research and previous research use expert evaluators to confirm the findings. Then, with another previous study, it specifically examines Indonesian interference in students' English writing, providing a localised contribution to the field; and second, it not only identifies error types but also explores students' perceptions of their own errors. Furthermore, unlike the Thai review article, the current study adopts a qualitative case study approach, generating empirical insights directly from learners' writings and perspectives, thus offering both theoretical and practical implications for EFL teaching in the Indonesian context.

## **H. Organisation of The Study**

This research is organised into five chapters, each consisting of several points that explain the chapter.

**Chapter I Introduction,** it consists of Background of The Study, Identification of Problem, Research Question, Objective of Study, Limitations of Study, Significance of Study, Previous Study, and Organization of the Study.

**Chapter II Theoretical Framework,** it consists of Definition of Writing, Purpose of Writing, Type of Writing, Error Analysis, Definition of Indonesian Interference, and Types of Interference.

**Chapter III Research Methodology** it consists of Research Method, Research Instrument, Technique of Data Collection, and Technique of Data Analysis.

**Chapter IV Research Finding and Discussion,** it consists of Results and Discussion

**Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestions,** it consists of Conclusion and Suggestions