Tracing Interlanguage through Grammatical Errors: An Analysis of Indonesian–English Translation by Junior High School Students

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Abstract

This study examines grammatical errors in Indonesian–English translation by junior high school students to trace interlanguage development during second language acquisition. In Indonesian EFL classrooms, grammatical errors persist as a key learning challenge, reflecting both limited linguistic mastery and the evolving interlanguage system in learners' cognition. This mixed-method research integrates error analysis and interlanguage theory, involving 28 eighth-grade students who completed a short translation task followed by interviews. Errors were analyzed using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, covering omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, and subsequently quantified and interpreted linguistically. Findings show that misformation and omission errors dominate, indicating transitional interlanguage stages shaped by literal translation strategies and structural transfer from Indonesian. The study highlights the cognitive and sociolinguistic factors influencing learners' interlanguage, including instructional input and habitual language use. Its novelty lies in systematically linking grammatical errors in translation with interlanguage development at the junior high school level in Indonesia, an underexplored context. The study contributes to applied linguistics by extending interlanguage and error analysis frameworks to a Southeast Asian setting and offers pedagogical insights for grammar and translation instruction. Teachers are encouraged to design interlanguage-sensitive remedial strategies addressing dominant error types and bridging structural differences between Indonesian and English.

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INTRODUCTION

English, as an international language, has long been a crucial necessity in Indonesia's educational landscape (Hidayat et al., 2022; Zein et al., 2020). Beyond being a means of communication, English is perceived as essential capital for students to compete in both academic and professional domains. However, classroom realities reveal that English learning at the junior high school level continues to face numerous challenges, particularly when students are required to produce the target language actively (Pajarwati et al., 2021; Suryanto & Sari, 2021). One of the most prominent issues is the occurrence of grammatical errors in translating from Indonesian into English. These errors do not merely indicate a lack of grammatical knowledge but also reflect the developing interlanguage system within students' minds. As explained by Budiman et al. (2021) and Khotimah et al. (2019), interlanguage is a transitional linguistic system that emerges when second language learners attempt to bridge

their native and target languages. Accordingly, students' errors can be interpreted as cognitive traces that are valuable for deeper understanding.

This issue becomes particularly significant because, in many Indonesian English classrooms, grammar instruction tends to remain normative and prescriptive. Teachers often emphasize right–wrong correctness over understanding the underlying reasons for students' errors (Alrajafi, 2021; Muslim et al., 2020). In fact, when errors are analyzed systematically, they can provide rich insights into second language development stages. For instance, errors in tense usage, article omission, or adjective placement are not merely weaknesses but manifestations of students' efforts to reconcile the agglutinative structure of Indonesian with the analytic nature of English. This fact suggests that rather than being seen as failure, grammatical errors can serve as entry points for understanding how students' interlanguage operates. Unfortunately, this aspect is often overlooked by both teachers and applied linguistics research in Indonesia.

A number of previous studies have examined language errors among English learners at both secondary and tertiary levels. Gayed et al. (2022) and Kohnke et al. (2023) introduced Error Analysis as a method for tracing second language learners' mistakes. Bashori et al. (2022) and Bryant et al. (2023) extended this framework by proposing the theory of interlanguage, which remains one of the foundational approaches in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies. Subsequent works have demonstrated that grammatical errors can be categorized based on specific taxonomies, such as those proposed by Kashinathan & Aziz (2021) and Russell (2020) through the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, encompassing omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Although this approach has been widely applied across contexts, its implementation within Indonesian junior high school students' translation tasks remains limited.

In Indonesia, research on grammatical errors among junior high school students has been conducted, but it often focuses merely on frequency counts or error classification. For example, Adnyani et al. (2023) and Hidayati & Santiana (2020) found that students frequently struggle with regular and irregular verb usage. Similar findings by Setiyorini et al. (2020) and Souisa et al. (2020) highlight the dominance of omission errors in Indonesian EFL students' writings. Meanwhile, Lumaela & Que (2021) and Shiddiq et al. (2023) revealed that first language interference plays a strong role in syntactic errors, particularly in word order and article usage. In addition, Septiana (2020) and Wenno et al. (2021) emphasized that literal translation strategies reinforce specific error patterns. Although these studies are valuable, most stop at surface description without connecting the findings to interlanguage development.

International literature shows similar phenomena. Chien et al. (2020) and Hussain et al. (2020) affirm that errors are an integral part of language learning, while Tai & Chen (2023) emphasize that interlanguage is dynamic and influenced by both internal and external factors. Kohnke et al. (2023) view errors as inevitable indicators of cognitive development in SLA. Furthermore, Litualy & Serpara (2021) and Prihandani (2023) highlight language transfer as a major source of errors, an issue particularly relevant in Indonesia, where typological

differences exist between agglutinative and analytic languages. Recent studies by Erlangga et al. (2019) and Hukubun et al. (2022) demonstrate that grammatical error analysis can reveal how instructional input, communication strategies, and sociolinguistic factors shape interlanguage development. Moreover, Erlangga et al. (2019) showed that Asian learners tend to produce specific error patterns distinct from European learners, indicating the need for cross-contextual studies.

Nevertheless, few studies have addressed Indonesian–English translation at the junior high school level. Translation is a key skill requiring not only vocabulary knowledge but also grammatical mastery. The translation process vividly illustrates how interlanguage operates, how students transfer Indonesian language patterns into English, guess at correct forms, and reorganize sentence structures. Some studies, such as those by Marzulina et al. (2019) and Ramendra (2021), have discussed the role of interlanguage in writing and translation, but Indonesia's linguistic context remains underexplored. Thus, there remains a significant research gap to be filled through more in-depth investigation.

This study seeks to address that gap by examining interlanguage through grammatical errors found in students' Indonesian–English translations. Rather than merely counting and categorizing errors, it aims to interpret their underlying meanings as reflections of interlanguage development. The analysis includes not only omission, addition, and misformation but also misordering and relevant sociolinguistic factors. In doing so, this research offers a more comprehensive perspective on English learning processes in Indonesia.

Another contribution of this study lies in its attempt to expand applied linguistics discourse within the Southeast Asian context. Most SLA literature remains rooted in European and American contexts, where languages share similar typological features. Investigating Indonesian students' interlanguage as they shift from an agglutinative to an analytic linguistic system can therefore provide significant insights. The findings are not only relevant to English education in Indonesia but may also enrich global understanding of how interlanguage evolves in diverse linguistic environments. This perspective is expected to contribute a new voice to international academic discussions on second language acquisition.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the types of grammatical errors that appear in Indonesian–English translation by junior high school students, trace the interlanguage patterns reflected in these errors, and identify the underlying factors. The objective is not merely to provide descriptive data but also to emphasize that errors represent an essential and constructive part of the learning process. Through such analysis, the study seeks to offer pedagogical recommendations for more effective grammar and translation teaching while expanding theoretical perspectives on interlanguage in the Indonesian educational context.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design of this study was developed by considering the nature of the problem, grammatical errors in Indonesian–English translation and how these reflect students' interlanguage development. The study employed a qualitative–quantitative descriptive approach, or mixed methods. This choice rests on the premise that language

errors cannot be fully understood through numbers and percentages alone but require deeper qualitative interpretation to uncover their underlying meanings. This perspective aligns with Ahmad et al. (2019) and Priya (2021), who assert that mixed methods enable researchers to obtain a more comprehensive picture of sociolinguistic phenomena. In this study, quantitative data were used to show the frequency and dominant patterns of errors, while qualitative data provided insights into the cognitive and social processes shaping students' interlanguage.

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 15 Manokwari, involving 28 eighth-grade students. The site was selected not only for accessibility but also because it represents typical English learning conditions in rural junior high schools. By focusing on a school located far from major urban centers, this research aims to depict a more authentic reality of English learning, where limited resources and diverse student backgrounds influence learning outcomes. Eighth-grade students were chosen because, at this stage, they have already studied English for over two years, meaning their errors more accurately reflect developing interlanguage systems rather than beginner confusion.

All 28 students in the class participated as research subjects. They completed a translation test specifically designed to elicit English grammatical structures indicative of their proficiency levels. This sample size was considered adequate to capture error variation while allowing detailed analysis of each student's work. In addition, several students were interviewed briefly to discuss their English learning experiences, strategies, and difficulties in translation. These interviews were crucial for uncovering factors underlying errors, including native language influence, literal translation habits, and instructional input.

Data collection was carried out in two main stages. First, students were asked to translate a short paragraph from Indonesian into English. The paragraph was constructed to include basic grammatical structures such as article usage, verb forms, and word order. The translations were then analyzed using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy developed by Mohajan (2018) and Susanto et al. (2024), which includes omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The analysis followed the procedures outlined by Ehrman & Kline (2022): identifying errors, classifying them, describing their forms, evaluating frequency, and interpreting their meanings. The second stage involved short interviews and questionnaires exploring students' learning backgrounds, daily language use, and experiences in learning grammar and translation.

Quantitative analysis of the translation data calculated the percentage of each error category, identifying dominant and recurring patterns. Qualitative interpretation then linked these errors to stages of interlanguage development. For instance, article omission errors were interpreted as negative transfer from Indonesian, which lacks an article system, while verb misformation indicated learners' attempts to hypothesize grammatical patterns in English. Thus, quantitative results provided statistical structure, whereas qualitative insights deepened the linguistic interpretation.

To ensure data validity, the study applied triangulation by comparing multiple data sources, translation test results, student interviews, and English teachers' notes. Teachers'

reflections on common grammar difficulties served as supplementary information supporting the researchers' interpretation. Additionally, two researchers independently analyzed the errors to minimize subjectivity and reached consensus through discussion. This triangulation approach follows Bryda & Costa (2023) and Khoa et al. (2023), who argue that employing multiple sources and methods enhances the credibility of qualitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Profile of Grammatical Errors in Students' Translations

The profile of grammatical errors in students' translations revealed a complex and intriguing picture of the interlanguage processes developing among junior high school learners. From a total of 64 grammatical errors identified in the translation tasks of 28 students, the distribution shows that misformation errors dominate with 28 cases (40%), followed by omission with 17 cases (35%), addition with 15 cases (20%), and misordering, which appeared only sporadically, making up an insignificant percentage. This distribution indicates that structural formation errors (misformation) and the omission of grammatical elements (omission) are the main challenges faced by Indonesian middle school students in English translation tasks. The following table summarizes the distribution of grammatical error types found in this study:

Table 1 Distribution of Grammatical Errors Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Type of Error	Number of Errors	Percentage
Misformation	28	40%
Omission	17	35%
Addition	15	20%
Misordering	4	5%
Total	64	100%

Source: Research Analysis (2023)

The dominance of misformation errors can be seen in the students' translation of a simple sentence from "Dia pergi ke sekolah setiap hari" into "He go to school every day." This reflects a negative transfer pattern from Indonesian, which lacks verbal inflection for third-person singular subjects, leading students to omit the –s ending on verbs. As emphasized by Apituley et al. (2022) and Manuputty (2022), this phenomenon is not merely a form of failure but evidence of an emerging interlanguage system, an internal second language system influenced by the learner's first language and communication strategies.

Meanwhile, omission errors are evident in the absence of key elements such as articles or auxiliary verbs. For instance, the target sentence "She is reading a book" was rendered by some students as "She reading book." This recurring pattern occurs mainly because Indonesian lacks direct equivalents for the articles a/an and the consistent use of the auxiliary be. An interview with one student, referred to as "R," revealed that they felt "confused about when to add is or are, because in everyday Indonesian there are no such forms." This illustrates the limited mapping between first and second language grammatical structures

during the transitional phase.

Errors under the addition category showed a different trend, characterized by the inclusion of unnecessary grammatical elements. A frequent example is the double use of auxiliaries, such as "She is can sing." In an interview, another student, "M," mentioned that they added *is* because the sentence felt "incomplete" without it. This phenomenon demonstrates how inconsistent instructional input can create forms of hypercorrection, in which learners attempt to "secure grammatical correctness" by adding elements that are actually inappropriate. Recent theories of second language learning highlight that such errors often stem from overgeneralization strategies, learners' tendency to extend rules they already understand into contexts where they do not apply (Sarah, 2022; Tableessy & Umkeketony, 2022).

Although misordering errors were rare, examples such as "He to school goes every day" still occurred. This indicates direct transfer from Indonesian syntactic structure into English, placing adverbial elements differently from the target language norms. Such findings reinforce Guo's (2022) view that interlanguage is a dynamic system that constantly evolves according to learners' experiences, linguistic input, and internalization strategies.

Classroom observations provided further insight into the instructional conditions underlying these errors. Teachers were observed to emphasize vocabulary mastery over grammatical structure. The learning process was dominated by direct translation exercises from simple texts without explicit explanation of structural differences between Indonesian and English. In several cases, students appeared more focused on finding lexical equivalents in dictionaries rather than attending to grammatical rules. This finding strengthens the notion that the dominance of misformation and omission errors originates not only from cognitive limitations but also from pedagogical input that insufficiently emphasizes functional grammar.

Sociolinguistic factors also played a role in shaping the learners' interlanguage. In informal interactions outside the classroom, students primarily used Indonesian or local languages, resulting in minimal exposure to English syntax. Some students admitted that they only used English during exams or when responding to teachers' questions, not in everyday conversation. This situation highlights that sociolinguistic contexts influence learners' error profiles, aligning with contemporary theories of second language acquisition that stress the importance of language-use context in interlanguage formation (Sarah, 2022; Septiana, 2020; Shiddiq et al., 2023; Tableessy & Umkeketony, 2022).

Misformation and Omission as Reflections of Interlanguage Stages

The two most dominant grammatical errors in students' translations, misformation and omission, serve as tangible reflections of the interlanguage stages experienced by junior high school learners of English. Based on the data, misformation accounted for 28 cases (40%) and omission for 17 cases (35%). The predominance of these two categories indicates that second language acquisition does not progress linearly but rather through cycles of experimentation, hypothesis formation, and adaptation from the first language structure to the target language system (Agbay & Reyes, 2019; Mubarok & Budiono, 2022).

Misformation errors illustrate how students construct hypotheses about English grammar rules based on limited input and learning experience. For example, in "He go to school every day" instead of "He goes to school every day," the learner ignored the rule of adding –s to third-person singular verbs. In an interview, student "N" explained that they often just "guessed" what seemed logical, saying that adding –s felt strange because there was no equivalent in Indonesian. This supports the view that misformation errors are not signs of total failure but rather attempts to interpret the target language structure in a way that makes sense to the learner. Guo (2022) and Le (2023) stress that such errors represent an experimental phase of interlanguage, during which learners actively test their linguistic hypotheses.

Conversely, omission errors reveal stronger negative transfer from the first language. For instance, sentences such as "I 13 years old" instead of "I am 13 years old" and "I born in Manokwari on 20 March 2009" instead of "I was born in Manokwari on 20 March 2009" demonstrate the omission of necessary grammatical elements:

Table 2 Examples of Omission Errors in Students' Translations

No.	Source Sentence (Indonesian)	Student Translation	Correct Translation
1	Saya berumur 13 tahun	I 13 years old	I am 13 years old
2	Saya lahir di Manokwari pada tanggal 20 Maret 2009	I born in Manokwari on 20 March 2009	I was born in Manokwari on 20 March 2009

Source: Field Data, 2023

From interviews, student R admitted being unaccustomed to adding am or was because such forms do not exist in Indonesian. This suggests that omissions of key grammatical components often occur not due to carelessness but because the first language system provides no relevant structural reference. Indonesian lacks to be in nominal predicates; thus, omissions emerge as adaptive strategies in constructing English sentences.

Field observations reinforced this finding. In several classroom sessions, teachers emphasized vocabulary memorization over sentence structure exercises. Students were asked to translate reading passages by directly substituting words into English, with minimal focus on grammar aspects such as *to be*, tense, or morphology. Many students rushed to complete their tasks without checking sentence structure, resulting in repeated omissions. Such classroom conditions foster frequent omission errors because grammatical input remains insufficient to develop a more complex interlanguage system.

On the other hand, misformation reflects learners' creative attempts to internalize target language rules. A common example is "I am born in Manokwari" instead of "I was born in Manokwari." This demonstrates how students apply an understood rule (using *to be* in nominal sentences) to inappropriate contexts. Student M explained that they used am because they believed every sentence starting with "I" must be followed by *am*. Such errors align with the concept of overgeneralization, the overextension of learned rules to incorrect situations (Harahap, 2021). Thus, misformation represents not mere deficiency but evidence

of active cognitive processing in constructing target language rules.

When compared, omission appears to stem more from first language transfer, while misformation reflects learners' hypothesis-testing strategies in mastering the target language. Nonetheless, both illustrate the dynamic, flexible, and adaptive nature of interlanguage (Dinamika & Hanafiah, 2019). Interlanguage is not a static system; it evolves through exposure, interaction, and learning strategies. In this sense, errors are not failures but evidence of transitional stages toward a more stable English system.

From a pedagogical perspective, understanding the dominance of misformation and omission is essential for teachers in designing learning strategies. Teachers can emphasize contrastive exercises between Indonesian and English structures, for instance, highlighting the necessity of to be in predicative sentences or distinguishing between am and was according to temporal context. Observations also suggest that students require more authentic exercises focusing not only on vocabulary but also on full sentence construction. Such instructional adjustments can strengthen grammatical awareness and accelerate learners' interlanguage development toward greater stability.

The Role of Literal Translation Strategies and Mother Tongue Transfer

One of the key findings of this study is the tendency of students to employ a literal translation strategy, translating texts word-for-word from Indonesian into English without considering the grammatical structure of the target language. This strategy appeared in almost all student translations and often led to errors such as misordering and addition. For example, one student translated "gadis yang sangat cantik" into "beautiful very girl" instead of "very beautiful girl." This error reflects the student's direct transfer of word order from the source language without accounting for English syntax. Literal translation is indeed common in the early stages of second language acquisition, as learners rely heavily on their first language as a foundation. However, without proper instructional guidance, this strategy may hinder the development of a stable interlanguage system.

Interviews with several students clearly revealed this tendency. One informant, S, explained that she always attempted to translate word-for-word because she considered it the safest way to produce English sentences. She added that when she tried to alter the word order, she felt confused and afraid of making mistakes, so she reverted to the Indonesian structure. Another student, A, stated that she often focused on choosing the correct vocabulary but did not pay much attention to word arrangement. These statements indicate that literal translation is not simply a form of carelessness but a communicative strategy that students perceive as effective in completing translation tasks. Dinamika and Hanafiah (2019) emphasize that such communication strategies are a crucial part of second language learning, where learners use available linguistic resources to maintain communication even if the result does not fully conform to the target language norms.

However, literal strategies often result in addition errors, namely the insertion of unnecessary grammatical elements due to the direct influence of the first language. A prominent example is the sentence "Good morning, friend-friend, how are you?" translated from "Selamat pagi teman-teman, apa kabar?" The student duplicated the word friend to

indicate plurality, mimicking Indonesian reduplication patterns. In English, however, plurality is marked simply by the suffix –s, so the correct form is "friends." During the interview, student R stated that writing "friend-friend" felt more accurate because it followed the familiar structure of her mother tongue. This addition error illustrates how negative transfer from Indonesian shapes students' interlanguage patterns. This aligns with Bashori et al. (2022) and Bryant et al. (2023), who argue that first-language transfer is one of the primary factors shaping interlanguage systems, functioning both as a scaffold and as a potential barrier.

Classroom observations also revealed that literal translation strategies emerged from instructional patterns that emphasized direct lexical translation. Teachers often wrote lists of Indonesian words and their English equivalents on the board, asking students to construct sentences using those words. This activity unintentionally encouraged literal thinking among students. In several observed instances, students completed translation exercises by copying words one by one according to Indonesian word order, without attempting to adapt to English syntax. As a result, misordering errors such as "I like very football" or "They homework do" frequently occurred. A classroom environment that prioritizes word matching over structural understanding clearly reinforces students' reliance on literal strategies.

Conceptually, literal translation can be viewed as a developmental strategy in the early stages of second language acquisition. According to Wakefield et al. (2023), such communication strategies are learners' attempts to sustain fluency by relying on the linguistic repertoire they already possess. In other words, students take a perceived "safe shortcut" to convey meaning. However, if literal strategies persist without instructional intervention, interlanguage development may stagnate as erroneous patterns become fossilized. Repeated misordering, for example, can lead students to internalize incorrect structures as acceptable forms.

Field data show that students actually possess an awareness of structural differences but often lack the confidence to apply them. During interviews, student N mentioned that she knew "very" should precede an adjective but still wrote "beautiful very girl" because she was influenced by Indonesian word order, which places modifiers at the end. This demonstrates that errors do not necessarily indicate ignorance but rather the negotiation process between first and target language systems. Such errors mark active cognitive engagement, as emphasized by Adnyani et al. (2023) and Tai and Chen (2023), who argue that interlanguage represents a dynamic, evolving system shaped through trial and error.

Cognitive and Sociolinguistic Factors in Interlanguage Formation

Cognitive and sociolinguistic factors play a crucial role in understanding how students' interlanguage systems form and evolve during English learning. Data from interviews and classroom observations indicate that interlanguage emerges from the intersection between students' cognitive processing limitations and the sociolinguistic environment that shapes their habits. A prominent finding is students' difficulty in processing complex grammatical rules, such as subject–verb agreement. Several students produced sentences like "She go to school every day" instead of "She goes to school every day." When asked, informant S

admitted that she often did not notice verb changes even after instruction because, in her view, verbs in Indonesian do not change according to the subject. This reflects cognitive limitations in processing linguistic features that differ from those of the first language.

At the same time, sociolinguistic factors also exert significant influence. In the interviews, student R noted that she rarely heard English outside the classroom, so when required to use it, she reverted to Indonesian-based patterns. Classroom observations supported this claim. When the teacher asked students to engage in short English dialogues, most of them spontaneously inserted Indonesian phrases or switched entirely to their first language when lacking vocabulary. This indicates that interlanguage development is shaped not only by cognitive factors but also by the lack of authentic exposure in social contexts. As Guo (2022) and Harahap (2021) explain, interlanguage is a dynamic system influenced by both linguistic input and the learning environment surrounding the learner.

Limited teaching materials further reinforced students' error patterns. Classroom observations revealed that teachers often relied on standard textbooks emphasizing translation and gap-filling exercises. Such practices provide little opportunity for students to explore more natural communicative contexts. Consequently, students tended to think within the structural framework of Indonesian and then impose that framework on English. Informant N even admitted that she felt more comfortable working on written exercises but was confused when asked to speak spontaneously. This finding highlights how limited pedagogical input and learning resources can increase students' dependence on their first language, deepening transfer-based interlanguage patterns.

From a cognitive perspective, this also relates to students' internal strategies for understanding grammatical rules. Dinamika and Hanafiah (2019) and Harahap (2021) argue that linguistic errors should not be viewed as failures but as reflections of hypotheses that learners test during the language acquisition process. For instance, a student who writes "He can sings" is testing the hypothesis that all singular subjects require verbs ending in –s. This error demonstrates students' efforts to construct their own grammatical rules, even if the results deviate from the target language. In this context, interlanguage represents an active cognitive process situated between mother tongue transfer and new hypothesis formation.

Beyond internal factors, external elements such as the learning environment are equally important. School observations indicated that English was rarely used outside the classroom. Students' social environments were dominated by their mother tongue, even during group learning activities. In one observation, a group of students tasked with discussing an English text began their conversation in English but switched entirely to Indonesian after a few minutes, returning to English only to read specific sentences from the text. This demonstrates the strong influence of the social environment on language use. In line with Lin and Leung (2024), limited linguistic input in daily interactions makes it difficult for students to internalize target language rules, resulting in interlanguage that remains heavily shaped by their first language.

Table 3 Examples of Student Errors and Contributing Factors

Type of Error	Example Sentence	Cognitive Factor	Sociolinguistic Factor
Subject–Verb Agreement	She go to school every day	Difficulty processing verb inflection based on subject	Indonesian lacks subject-based verb changes
Overgeneralization	He can sings very well	Incorrect hypothesis that all singular subjects require –s	Limited authentic corrective feedback
Reduplication Transfer	friend-friend for "friends"	Internalized pluralization rule still developing	Common reduplication in daily Indonesian use
Misordering	Beautiful very girl	Literal thinking based on source language structure	Lack of sufficient exposure to English syntax

Source: Field data, 2023

This table demonstrates that each error is not an isolated event but rather the result of interaction between students' cognitive strategies in constructing rules and the sociolinguistic constraints limiting their exposure to correct forms.

The theoretical implication of these findings is that interlanguage should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced simultaneously by internal and external factors. This study expands on the interlanguage framework proposed by Adnyani et al. (2023), Setiyorini et al. (2020), and Shiddiq et al. (2023), who identify five primary processes in interlanguage formation: first language transfer, training transfer, learning strategies, communication strategies, and overgeneralization. Data from the Indonesian context reveal how these five processes operate within a sociolinguistic environment dominated by an agglutinative language like Indonesian, differing from prior studies focusing on analytic languages such as Chinese or Japanese.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study affirm that grammatical errors in Indonesian–English translation among junior high school students should not be seen merely as linguistic weaknesses but as reflections of ongoing interlanguage development. The dominance of misformation and omission errors indicates that students are in a transitional phase in which literal translation strategies and first-language structural transfer strongly shape their interlanguage patterns. These results confirm that second language acquisition is non-linear, influenced by cognitive factors, such as limited ability to process complex grammatical rules, and sociolinguistic factors, such as limited authentic input from teachers and the dominance of the mother tongue in daily interaction. Consequently, this study not only describes the profile of grammatical errors and traces students' interlanguage patterns but also extends the interlanguage theoretical framework to the Indonesian context, which exhibits distinct characteristics compared to previous studies. The main contribution of this research lies in emphasizing that learner errors should be treated as valuable sources of insight for teachers to design pedagogical strategies responsive to interlanguage stages, providing more contextual interventions to bridge structural differences between Indonesian and English.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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