THE USE OF NON-STANDARD INDONESIAN LANGUAGE: STUDENTS’ ERRORS IN WRITING ACADEMIC PAPERS

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that writing is one of the most difficult language skills among the four other language skills. It stems from the fact that writing is an activity of expressing ideas of the mind that requires a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic competencies. This linguistic competence includes knowledge of morphology, syntax, and discourse. In writing, a person is required to use the correct choice of standard words, compose effective sentences, and arrange coherent paragraphs. The non-linguistic competence is the knowledge of information and scientific material owned by the author. This descriptive qualitative research aims to identify the errors of IAIN Bengkulu students in writing academic papers in Indonesian. Data was collected from PGMI and PAI student theses which were then analyzed through four stages, namely preparation, data collection, data analysis, and processing/presenting the results of data analysis. The results showed that the errors that were often found in the writing of students (including lecturers) both in the form of papers and thesis included the use of standard words, affixations, and effective sentences. Practically, this research is expected to be able to provide benefits for students and other academics in writing and producing higher quality scientific work.

Keywords: linguistic competence; student mistakes; standard language; academic paper
A. Introduction

The Indonesian language, commonly known as Bahasa Indonesia, has achieved the status of an official language in 1945 along with the declaration of Indonesian independence from the Netherlands. It is presently considered as one of the important subjects that must be learnt by students of primary, secondary, and tertiary level. The government has made a regulation dealing with some important subjects stated in the curriculum on the act of the Republic of Indonesia on national education system law, number 20, year 2003, and article 37. It requires Indonesian (BI) to be included in the school curriculum. Principally, learning Indonesian will establish the Indonesian character and personality. Solin (2011) emphasizes the significance of studying Indonesian for students as a way to shape and strengthen identity and personality of a person. Since this country has various languages (particularly, local languages), it needs a unitary language that can unify the society in communication. Therefore, Indonesian language plays a big part in this situation.

In this globalization era, the existence of Indonesian needs to be nurtured and promoted by every Indonesian citizen. This official language should be maintained in order to impede foreign influences and cultures that are not in keeping with the Indonesian language and culture. Murti (2015) said that by implementing Indonesian as one of the core school subjects will create a truly Indonesian citizen and develop good human resources. At primary level, the students are expected to master and apply some language skills of BI including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Then, in secondary level, they will be given various materials of literature, grammar, and linguistics. While at tertiary level, they are asked to master writing an academic paper.

Since students have studied BI at elementary school, they should ideally have enough capability in mastering this language both in spoken and written. In fact, the quality of language use—especially in written language—has not fairly performed well by the students. It was found that there are some errors made by higher level students, specifically in writing academic papers such as essays, articles, journals, thesis, or dissertation. A study conducted by Adipurwa and Haryati (2017) revealed that higher level students at ISI Denpasar still makes language errors when they write academic paper in the areas of spelling, morphology, syntax, and paragraphs. Uswati and Nuryanto’s finding (2018: 2) on syntactical errors on student’s thesis of IAIN Nurul Jati Cirebon stated that many students have still tended to ignore the correct language dimension in their academic papers especially in writing the thesis (skripsi). Various errors still occur in writing standard word, diction, sentence, and spelling. In addition, Sukmawaty (2017) analyzed students’ thesis of information system study program at Kharisma Makassar. It was found that the use of capital letters, italics, punctuation, diction, sentence construction, and paragraph structure are some language errors that
are commonly made by the students in writing their papers.

Being aware of the Indonesian rules in writing an academic paper is necessarily needed by the students, especially in tertiary level. It is part of academic requirement in every university. The students must be able to produce academic work either to submit a final test work asked by the lecturers or to write a thesis as a final project to graduate. The characteristic of an academic language used in scientific writing is the ability to express complex ideas and thoughts carefully and abstractly. Accuracy of ideas can only be done if the structure of the language (grammar) including word formation rules is well mastered.

But, in reality, most of the students encounter a lot of difficulties in writing a paper academically. Rahmiati (2014) and Nurhayatin et.al (2018) found that one of the obstacles mostly did by the students is the ability to use a language correctly and properly as in accordance with the grammar rules of Indonesian (The enhanced Indonesian spelling system). There are still many students experience writing constraints from technical aspects and use of Indonesian grammar, such as having no clear subject, predicate, and the object of the sentence.

This article seeks to the common errors made by higher level students concerning (1) standard language used especially Indonesian spelling adopted from foreign language, (2) affixation, and (3) effective sentence. Hopefully, it is expected to be a good contribution for students and other practitioners in writing an academic paper.

B. Method

The nature of this study is qualitative approach. Hence, a descriptive study was employed as its method. It aims to describe the characteristics or phenomenon being studied in a research. In this study, students’ thesis of PGMI (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education) and (Islamic education) study programs become the objects to be analyzed and described. The analysis was done through content analysis following Fraenkle and Wallen (2012) who explain it as “a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications”. It can be written contents of a communication, such as textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles, cookbooks, songs, political speeches, advertisements, pictures—in fact, the contents of virtually any type of communication.

The research procedures consist of four stages, namely (1) preparation, (2) data collection, (3) data analysis, and (4) data presentation. Firstly, the researcher collected all data from students’ thesis of IAIN Bengkulu, specifically PGMI and PAI to find their syntactic errors (including phrase and sentence). After that, the concept and theory that relate to the area being analyzed are prepared in doing this study. Secondly, in collecting data, all errors contained in text were taken notes in a table. Taking notes technique is one of the techniques used to get the result of data that have been analyzed. Thirdly, to analyze the data, the categorization was used along with the criteria of syntactic errors in the table. It aims to classify what kinds of errors and the causes are being made by the students in terms of structure in a phrase or sentence. Fourthly, the last
step is to present the data analyzed in this study. It is used to describe the result found in this research.

**Error in Using Standard Word of Indonesian**

There was a historical background of performing Indonesian spelling before the 1928 Youth congress that decided Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) as the national language of Indonesia. This language, Indonesian, has been revised its spelling for several times. The earliest spelling proposed by Van Ophuisjen was in 1901 (Dardjowidjojo, 2003, p. 220). It is a Malay spelling with Latin letters. When Indonesia declared its independence, this spelling was adopted as a standard language. Two years after independence, a new spelling was coming up that was known as Soewandi’s spelling. This was also subsequently proposed and adopted. This spelling, in addition, had lasted for twenty years. In 1967, this spelling system was replaced by the new one in an attempt to increase the mutual intelligibility between Malay and Indonesia that has cognate languages (Chaer and Agustina, 2004). Finally, the two countries set up a language committee. The main result is a common spelling system which has been known in Indonesia since 1987 as Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia Yang Disempurnakan (a perfected General Guide for Indonesian Spelling). Dardjowidjojo (2003, p. 220) said that this is the spelling system used by Indonesia and Malaysia. He also added that during the Second World War, the Japanese rulers of Indonesia set up a Language Commission (Komisi Bahasa) in order to create new terms and systematically develop Indonesian as a world language of administration and modern technology.

After having independent status, the Language Commission went through several incarnations culminating in the establishment in 1975 of the Centre for language Development (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, commonly shortened to Pusat Bahasa) under the Government's Department of National Education. The organization persisted to begin research on Indonesian; creating new terms and providing support for the standardization and propagation of the language. Two initiatives that had been published were a standard grammar *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia* (A Standard Grammar of Indonesian, 1988) and a standard dictionary, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (A Comprehensive Dictionary of Indonesian, 1988). These have encouraged people to use an officially endorsed style of formal Indonesian by promoting a slogan of *Gunakan Bahasa Indonesia yang Baik dan Benar* (use good and correct Indonesian).

In reality, a serious problem with Indonesian reaching the status of national language is how to recognize the standard vocabulary. Many Indonesian words are borrowed from vernacular and foreign language. The vernacular language, particularly Javanese, had contributed a great number of lexical items, but they were very much restricted to social and cultural domains. In the matter of academic development and modern technology, the vernacular language does
not help much since it is a language that is used by people to talk in non-formal settings, like at home. Indonesian people currently face a modern and globalization era where academic and technological words are necessarily needed. A sensitive issue, of course, develops new words that should be standardized. People realize that new concepts and physical objects in this era require technical and practical terms to go. This prompts lead them to borrow and adopt words from foreign languages, particularly English and Arabic. Thus, Indonesian has words such as komputer, disket, realistis, kontropersi, organisasi, sosialisasi, and konservasi which are obviously adapted from English, and the words adapted from Arabic such as jadwal, khusus, jamaah, ulama, rakyat, pasal, wajib and syarat. To cope with the need of academic terms and the fast inflow of foreign words, the Ministry of National Educational Affairs actually has created a dictionary called Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) published by Pusat Bahasa (Centre for Language Development). Hence, the words borrowed and adapted from foreign language—mostly English and Arabic—should be standardized both in pronunciation and spelling.

Apparently, there are various errors found in written language related to inappropriate Indonesian spelling. Based on the general guidelines for EYD (Widjono, 2007, p.55), every single phone of "v" in affectivity which is always written in the middle, constantly becomes “f” for efektivitas. The similar words should also be in the same spelling such as kreativitas, objektivitas, produktivitas, subjektivitas, and aktivitas adapted from creativity, objectivity, productivity, and activity. This spelling guideline makes some Indonesian students confused whether ‘v’ or ‘f’ should be used in those words. Some always write kreatifitas, obyektifitas, produktifitas, subyektifitas, and aktifitas that are not in accordance with the EYD. Meanwhile, Samsuri (1981, p. 64) stated that Indonesian tongue is sometimes hard to spell consonant ‘v’. It is true that the word “creative” and other similar words become kreatif with “f” ending in Indonesian. In this case, they also assumed that when English words have "v" consonant in a word, then, it becomes "f" such as creative=kreatif. Hence, all vocabulary with "v" in creativity and activity, for instance, become kreatifitas and aktifitas. Dealing with the consonant "v" written in the first or middle words--not as suffix--such as volume, favourite, province, and November should be written volume, favorit, provinsi, and november in Indonesian. Nonetheless, the students sometimes get misspell and slip of the pen to write them. They wrote faforit, propinsi, folume, and nopember which are not true based on EYD.

English vocabulary has suffix (-tion) to determine a noun such as organization, coordination, and distribution. This suffix becomes (-sasi) in Indonesian spelling, like organisasi, koordinasi, and sosialisasi adapted from organization, coordination, and socialization. On the contrary, there is an error spelling that is usually found in any writing of academic papers as well as in formal speech written by the students. They sometimes write mengorganisir, diorganisir, mengkoordinir and dikoordinir. These inappropriate suffixes are obviously not standard of EYD guidelines. It should be mengorganisasi, diorganisasi,
mengoordasi, and dikoordasi. Indonesian spelling does not have suffix (-ir) for mengorgani-(sir) or dikoorde-(nir). Meanwhile, some English vocabulary that have vocal pronunciation in the first or middle of words tends to be unchanged in Indonesian spelling. The correct spellings for extreme, system, concrete, risk, practice, and theoretical are ekstrem, sistem, konkret, risiko, praktik, and teoritis (In Indonesian). Therefore, many students consider that the vocal of extr(e)me, conr(e)te, for instance, should be adjusted to ekstr(i)m, and konkr(i)t. Finally, in writing their academic paper, they use ekstrim, sistem, resiko, praktek, and teoritis which is not appropriate to EYD. Other errors of Indonesian spelling are also found in various words that have similar pronunciation between English and Indonesian. The words that deal with quality and quantity are always written as "kwalitas" and "kwantitas". Some Indonesian writers rarely do not realize that these words are actually adopted from English. The standard words for the vocal (u) in quality and quantity should be spelled kualitas and kuantitas.

Some terminology in Indonesian is not only derived from English, Dutch, and Sanskrit, but also adopted from Arabic. Chaer and Agustina (2004, p.200) argue that Arabic has given much contribution to Indonesian vocabulary. The words of khusus, rakyat, maklumat, jadwal, and hakikat are always used by almost Indonesian people. Unfortunately, several Indonesian writers still do not know the Indonesian standard words that are originated from Arabic. They mostly experience a slip of tongue as well as slip of a pen. The errors often found in most of students’ paper can be described as in jadual, hakekat, faham, fakir, dzuhur, sholat/sholat, and nasehat. This is what Indonesian people assume as the closest standard words. The correct words should be jadwal, hakikat, paham, piker, zuhur, salat, and nasihat. Seeing this phenomenon, based on Amilia’s observation (2018: 28) on academic writing at MA al-Ittihad al-Islami Sampang Madura, such error words occur because of habituation. Hence, the students should be forced to write as well as KBBI requires.

Such error words, Badudu (1981) reported that in formal language—as used in writing, public speeches and in education—many Indonesian people often use hypercorrect words. The words of syah, bathin, and izazah are considered as the true ones. These words are addressed to Arabic as if those were true. On the other hand, there is no spelling of Arabic words ending with s(y)ah, bat(h)in, and i(z)azah. According to KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia—A large dictionary of Indonesian)—the guide dictionary for searching Indonesian standard words, the correct spellings are sah, batin, and ijazah.

Someone who has an Islamic study background might be familiar with the Arabic words, but the others might be confused. Despite having Islamic studies background, writing errors in a standard language derived from Arabic are also found in students’ work. In reality, there is no research that reveals a significant relationship between Islamic background study and Indonesian standard words.
However, the students still lean towards writing incorrect words. The vocabulary such as sholat/shalat, al-Quran, dzikir, hadist, and dzuhur are the incorrect examples. They should be replaced into salat, Alquran, zikir, hadis, and zuhur.

Affixation Error

Samsuri (1981, p.190) explains that Indonesian affixes can be classified into prefix, infix, and suffix. The category of affixation in Indonesian is also similar to Bloomfield (1976) as in English. In order to get a clear picture of what the affixation will be embarked, the verbs used are limited only in men-verbs (infix) and their passive forms with “di-” (prefix).

Indonesian words that combine noun and verb is known as verb construction. It generally stands for two words, for example hancur lebur, garis bawah, and tanggung jawab. These verbs should be written separately. As a matter of fact, most of the students wrote hancur lebur or garis bawah in their paper and inserted prefix or suffix of Indonesian functions as verb such as [ber]tanggung jawab and garis bawah[i] which were also written separately. In Indonesian standard, if prefix {me-} and suffix {i} want to be added in garis bawah as active construction, this should be menggarisbawahi without space between them (should be merged). The same case can also be used in the active verbs like mempertanggungjawabkan, menghancurleburkan, and mengalihbahasakan.

The inappropriate spelling also deals with the use of capital letter such as [I]ndonesia, [I]slam, and [I]nggris. These words in many places should be capitalized, but when they are combined with affixation like me-kan and me-i, the capital letter should be ignored. See the examples written by the student bellow:

(1) Walisongo berhasil meng-Islamkan masyarakat Jawa dengan penaklukan budaya.

Walisongo successfully Islamized Javanese people through cultural approach.

(2) Dalam meng-Indonesiakan kata-kata asing diperlukan pedoman yang baik dan benar.

To indonesianize some foreign languages, it requires perfect and correct guidelines.

The main error in writing meng-Islamkan and meng-Indonesiakan is considerably caused by a slip of tongue. Many students of IAIN Bengkulu have known that the combination of affixation addressed to verbal meaning should be merged in writing, but they were confused how to write it well. Norrish (1983) explains that an error can occur in any situation because of unserious concentration while writing the correct words. Meanwhile, the correct words according to EYD spelling are mengislamkan and mengindonesiakan.

In using Indonesian standard, it must be noted that this language does not have suffix (-ir) for loan word taken from English. It merely has (-sasi), (-isme), or (-i) as Indonesian suffix, for example koordiasi, organisasi, idealisme, liberalisme, sosialis, koordinator, and direktur. These words are derived from coordination, liberalism, idealism, socialist, coordinator, and director. For coordination and organization, the correct words in Indonesian are koordinasi[si] and organisasi[si]. If prefix (me-) is added as
active and transitive verb, these words become *mengkoordinasi* and *mengorganisasi* as well as *dikoordinasi* and *diorganisasi* as passive verb. Hence, the errors writing words often done by many students are in *mengorganisir*, *mengkoordinir*, and *meminimalisir* as well as in *dikoordinir*, *diorganisir* as derivative verbs.

**Effective Sentences**

Norrish (1983, p. 6) stated that some good pedagogical reasons that have been suggested regarding the errors made by foreign learners are leniently. The most important reason is that the error itself may actually be a necessary part of learning a language. In the context of error written language, particularly how to make a sentence effectively, he also suggested that it is vital for people to learn to construct a grammatically acceptable sentence and be able to spell it correctly. The reason is due to a great deal of attention has traditionally been given to writing and error in the medium tends to be regarded as indicative of some type of failure.

The non-effective sentence written by the learner is due to no coherent information, meaning, and structure. In addition, the sentence written has more than one united idea or information that tends to error and ambiguity. There are requirements for effective sentence in BI. The effective sentence should be complete structure with subject and predicate, avoid vernacular and foreign language influence, be not pleonastic meaning, and avoid ambiguity. The finding errors written by the students can be shown as the following explanation focus on three criteria.

**a. Complete Sentences**

The complete sentence actually has two prominent components, namely subject and predicate. Putrayasa (2007) states that the sentence can be considered as a complete if at least the subject and predicate are explicitly shown. It was followed by a presence of the two main components that are necessary. Other components like object, adverb, and complement are voluntary performed. If there is none of two main components, the sentence must be error grammatically. See the sentences bellow:

(2a) *Untuk rencana ini memerlukan penelitian lebih lanjut*

(3a) *Dalam dunia pendidikan mengenal istilah pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa*  
(Adapted from a thesis of IAIN Bengkulu student)

The two sentences above are absolutely error. There is no subject in the sentence (2a) and (3a) because of unsuitable preposition [*untuk = for*] and [*dalam = in*] adhere in the sentence. Many students wrote ungrammatically correct sentence indeed become as a complement. In an attempt to make effective and considerable sentence, the preposition should be omitted.

The sentences (2b) and (3b) below are considerably correct instead of (2a) and (3a).
Rencana ini memerlukan penelitian lebih lanjut.
The plan needs a further research.

Dunia pendidikan mengenal istilah pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa.
The education sector recognizes student-centered learning.

In sentence (2b) and (3b), after deleting preposition [untuk] and [dalam], the subject is concretely clear; rencana ini and dunia pendidikan are the subject, mengenal and memerlukan are the predicate. Meanwhile, to make a logical sentence where the subject clearly relies on, the active and transitive verb of memerlukan and mengenal as predicate should be changed into diperlukan and dikenal as the passive verbs. The sentences below are considerably appropriate.

(2c) Untuk rencana ini diperlukan penelitian lebih lanjut.
(3c) Dalam dunia pendidikan dikenal istilah pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa.

b. Vernacular and Foreign Language Influence

The word vernacular is derived from the Latin word, vernāculus, which means native or indigenous. A vernacular language (non-standard dialect) is a native language or form of speech of specific population or a specific region living within the country. In Indonesia, there are many kinds of regional languages mostly used by society in their daily communication, such as Javanese, Batakinese, Rejang, Madurese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, , and so forth. These languages might influence the writers in using correctly Indonesian grammar due to the vernacular language they have. In addition, foreign language, like English, which is commonly used by Indonesian people as the third language may also affect somebody’s style in writing an academic paper.

Widjono (2007) said that writing academic paper is often misunderstood due to foreign language style influence. He added that the same style makes Indonesian sentence ambiguity is also influenced by vernacular language such as the two following sentences.

(4b) Penelitian ini dilakukan di MTs Ja al-Haq di mana guru-guru mengajar
This study was conducted at MTs Ja al-Haq where the teachers have taught

(5b) Penafsirannya Quraish Shihab yang dikutip oleh Muhyidin menjelaskan bahwa....
Quraish Shihab’exegation cited by Muhyidin stated that.....

Based on the data of this research, 40% students of IAIN Bengkulu tend to maintain the sentence (4a) while writing di mana (where) as a conjunction. Using di mana and penafsirannya Quraish Shihab for complex sentence is clearly influenced from foreign (English) and vernacular (Javanese) language. According to Indonesian Translation Method, these are not well-formed sentences because using di mana as conjunction and penafsirannya as a possessive pronoun. As a matter of fact, many academic writing done by the students—as well as done by lecturers also in other side—are incorrect in making use of complex construction as
exemplified on (4a) and (5b) above. Compare the sentence below:

(4b) Penelitian ini dilakukan di MTs Ja al-Haq tempat guru-guru mengajar.
(5b) Penafsiran Quraish Shihab yang dikutip oleh Muhyidin menjelaskan bahwa...

The two sentences on (4b) and (5b) above are considered true and effective according to Indonesian Grammar. The relative pronoun of [di mana] should be changed into [tempat] and the possessive [-nya] should be deleted.

c. Pleonastic Word's meaning

Every language has its different styles in identifying singular and plural word. In exemplifying sentence that has plural or singular meaning, for instance, English and Arabic are relatively more different than Indonesian. They also have a different way in ensuring something with their language. In English, the examples of pleonastic, such as a true fact, black darkness, burning fire, free gift, unexpected surprise, etc. There is a redundancy in each example in which they repeat the same sense in different words. This case can also be seen in Indonesian context, such as:

(6a) Banyak guru mengajukan protes atas kebijakan walikota Bengkulu.

(7a) Sebagai umat beragama, kita harus hormat-menghormati.

From the examples above, the sentence construction is clearly effective in Indonesian language. Yet, the students made them incorrect in terms of pleonastic. Plural sign of [banyak = many] were followed by [para = many], which were actually unnecessary to be added since it can cause repetition of the same words. Darmayani, Artawa, and Satyawati (2018) added that many Indonesian learners usually find those errors and pleonastic sentence correct as they are stated in the sentences. On the contrary, when people want to translate it in English, they should say ‘many students’. There is an additional –s after the plural noun. The correct sentences for two cases above are:

(6a) Banyak guru mengajukan protes atas kebijakan walikota Bengkulu, or
Para guru mengajukan protes atas kebijakan walikota Bengkulu.
Many students protest against Bengkulu mayor's policy.

The pleonastic sentence also can be found in sentence (7a). Reduplication word of tolong-menolong virtually has a meaning of mutual [saling] in BI. If we write “saling” for maintaining a “mutual” on tolong-menolong, the sentence must be pleonasm. In brief, the effective sentence is written as followed:

(7a) Sebagai umat beragama, kita harus saling hormat-menghormati, or
Sebagai umat beragama, kita harus saling menghormati.
As religious people, we should respect each other.

The Discussion section should be a reasoned and justifiable commentary on the importance of your findings. This section states why the problem is important; what larger issues and what propositions are confirmed or disconfirmed by the extrapolation of these findings to such overarching issues.

C. CONCLUSION

Writing an academic paper is not a simple matter. It requires a good competence in order to create a perfect writing that can be understood easily by all people. A writer should know how to use Indonesian standard words, correct affixation, and effective sentence. In addition, it needs also a coherent paragraph that affirms main idea or core massage for the writer. Describing the competences owned by some of Indonesian writers, it can be concluded that they should learn more and dig deeper the writing competences of Indonesian Standard Language in order to create best academic papers that can compete on the international scene.

REFERENCES


