Interlanguage Performance of EFL College Students: Evidenced in the First Semester of the English Letters Major-Indonesia

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Abstract

In EFL teaching, it has been theorized that intelligibility can be achieved by relative closeness of oral performance to the standard of EFL proficiency. The current study sought to investigate the position of interlanguage performance of EFL college students in terms of intelligibility of the language product (Speaking). Ten students' Mid Semester Tests of the Speaking Class were videotaped as the source of data in the study. They were in the First Semester of the English Department, majoring in English Letters. The oral performance of EFL college students as the research subjects were analyzed employing QDA Miner, a research software for text mining to position the students' points of interlanguage approximation. As it was only a case study with a limited number of subjects, the findings may not represent EFL students in general. It was revealed that only minimum intelligibility had been achieved. The students produced ungrammatical utterances, mispronounced words, limited communication strategies, lack of sentence variations, and most surprisingly with only a narrow scope of vocabulary selection to express their unforgettable memories in monologues. The errors were attributed to the influence of the mother tongue (Indonesian or Javanese in particular) within the interlanguage boundary of English and Indonesian. Room for improvement is still ahead as they are heading for the next seven semesters in the English Department. The study, pedagogically, concludes that, in teaching EFL, considerably sufficient proportions of teaching pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, should be given throughout the process of learning for the students to achieve the standard of EFL proficiency.

Keywords: interlanguage performance, EFL proficiency, intelligibility, speaking test, monologues

1. Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language has become obligatory in Indonesia starting from Elementary School to College Level of Education (Iftanti, 2012). However, when it comes to intelligibility, there are still problems here and there of different characteristics be they institutionally, departmentally or even individually. At college level, for instance, for non-English department students, EFL is taught as ESP (English for Specific Purposes) with only four to six credit points (equal to 94-140 hours of instruction), resulting in lack of confidence in the four language skills, let alone in accordance with their fields of studies (Renandya et al., 2018). Many of the students may, therefore, take extra courses outside the formal setting of education to qualify for their professions where English is being used on official basis. For English department students, the case is quite otherwise. They are trained to be competent in the four language skills as they are supposed to take positions as English teachers, translators or interpreters upon graduation (Anugerahwati & Saukah, 2010). Besides, they have got interests and motivation to learn English as a major of study. EFL in the English department is labeled as general English under education, linguistics or literary studies.

This study took place in the department of English Letters and sought to investigate the positions of interlanguage performance in speaking—right from the first semester to help make departmental policies related to the curriculum design tailored to the students' needs as graduates of an English Department—learning EFL as an end in itself at undergraduate level. They can still pursue further education at master or even doctorate programs, specializing in English education, linguistics or literature. English lecturers' quality requirements are quite high—minimally having master degrees in linguistics, applied linguistics, and (English) literature; even many have got their doctorate degrees up to academic professorship (Songbatumis, 2017).

1.1 Research on Interlanguage Performance

Research on interlanguage performance has been conducted world-wide, involving a wide range of students. A research (Al-Khresheh, 2015) reviewed interlanguage theories related to second language acquisition. It was elaborated that interlanguage theories had enjoyed their heyday as indicated by the emergence of teaching methodology based on the influence of the native language upon second or foreign language acquisition. The review ended in a surprising conclusion that interlanguage is not any more relevant in EFL teaching. However, it is important to have a little bit of awareness that the phonological system of the native language is inevitably to influence the acquisition of the target language pronunciation. It has been greatly felt by English teachers of Japanese nationality—how difficult it is to have correct pronunciation in order to be intelligible (Uchida & Sugimoto, 2020). The difficulty of pronunciation has also been confirmed in a research (Levis, 2020), that it is almost impossible to achieve native-like pronounce. It is recommended, however, to have near-native pronunciation.

It has been theorized that language is used to make meanings—relative ease of both decoding and encoding meanings (Quiroz, 2018). Meanwhile, a research (Moedjito et al., 2019) reported factors that make EFL learners' utterances more intelligible within the global intelligibility. It concluded that correct pronunciation accuracy and meaningful vocabulary are among the dominant factors influencing intelligibility. Very lately, correct grammar apart from pronunciation accuracy has also been claimed as contributing to intelligibility issues as reported in a book chapter (Roshid, 2020). It is also stressed that intelligibility does not have to be native-like but mutual understanding.

1.2 Theoretical Highlights on Interlanguage

Interlanguage was preliminarily defined by Selinker (1967) as the separate linguistic system produced by a second or foreign language learner on his or her attempt to perform in the TL while in the process of learning. The term 'interlanguage' is referred to as 'approximative system' by Nemser (1971) and, 'transitional competence' by Corder (1967). The three scholars undertook this in response to Lado (1957) who claimed that second language learners' linguistic products were thoroughly influenced by the native language (Tarone, 2012). Besides, the term 'interlanguage has revised its hypothesis in fourth themes, from its original hypothesis (lack of comprehensible input), to the second theme (influence of universal grammar on interlanguage development, the third theme (social context as central role), and the fourth theme (phenomena of fossilization). Historical and methodological perspectives have been expanded and elaborated in 'Interlanguage: Forty years later' (Han & Tarone, 2014).

Regardless of controversial debates over interlanguage theories, for the sake of the current study, it is necessary to highlight significant claims of the theories. An encyclopedia (Tarone, 2012) outlines Selinker (1972)'s hypothetical-psycholinguistic process of interlanguage, namely (1) native language transfer (2) transfer of training, (3) strategies of communication, (4) strategies of learning and, (5) fossilization phenomena. The most fundamental claim of hypothesis is that the linguistic forms of interlanguage are systematically produced at every level: phonology, morphology; syntax, semantics and pragmatics. They are not the native language (NL), nor the target language (TL), but in-between NL and TL. This has challenged researchers as to which point of interlanguage products that a particular student's second or foreign language is globally intelligible.

Interlanguage errors can be viewed as a result of negative transfer of NL in an attempt to produce TL such as carrying over the NL sounds or structures into the TL. Students may also wrongly transfer training contents due to previous learning experience or linguistic items overlearned / over-drilled for a curtain period of time. They may also apply a particular communication strategy in a wrong way, resulting in miscommunication. They may also perform a particular strategy of learning by making errors, but later on manage to correct the errors upon completion of the whole learning processes. Finally, they may fossilize or stop developing (Wei, 2008). This may occur when second or foreign language learning commence at later age.

1.3 Research Questions

Controversial debates over whether or not the first (native) language influence the second or foreign language acquisition have been around in EFL teaching contexts. First of all, those in support of contrastive analysts' hypothesis stress that differences between the native and the target languages constitute learning problems while similarities facilitate learning processes. Conversely, those in opposition argue that similar and systematic errors occur in second or foreign language learners regardless of the first language backgrounds. These two opposing poles triggered the emergence of Interlanguage Hypotheses.

This study attempted to revisit the case of the first semester students majoring in English Letters (Literature) in the mid semester test of their speaking class in terms of interlanguage performance under the following research questions:

1) In terms of interlanguage, what words are most frequently used by the students along the monologues to express their 'unforgettable memories'?

2) In terms of interlanguage, how grammatical are the students' utterances along the monologues to express 'unforgettable memories'?

3) In terms of interlanguage, how are communication strategies distributed along the monologues to express 'unforgettable memories'?

4) In terms of interlanguage, how are the chunk types distributed along the monologues to express 'unforgettable memories'?

2. Method

This study has been designed as a case investigation on interlanguage performance of EFL college students majoring in English Letters (Literature), regarding the speaking skill—a productive skill normally used as a barometer of success in language learning endeavors. For this purpose, the mid semester test of a speaking class was used as the source of data. It was the first semester class for which the reason was merely to create possible future treatments in the following semesters based on the research recommendations.

2.1 Research Subjects

Ten students were taken as the research subjects. Total sampling was used as the speaking class was of small size for quality assurance. This study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic where all classes were carried out online, employing the Moodle Platform as the Learning Management System (LMS) throughout the semester.

2.2 Data Collection

The data for this study were taken from the students' videos. At the end of the first semester, each student was assigned to create a monologue on a topic "Unforgettable Memories". The monologue was videotaped (in approximately five minutes), and uploaded for assessment of the speaking class. Thus, there were ten video files, each consisting of one five-minute monologue (recount). Each video was transcribed employing Otter Ai Software (online service), to guarantee validity of the transcription.

2.3 Data Analysis

QDA Miner, a research software for text mining was used to analyze the data in terms of (1) word frequency presented in a cloud form, and (2) meaning making, measuring the intelligibility of utterances. A text analyzer was also used to check the readability index. The findings were further interpretatively discussed to highlight problems disseminating meanings in accordance with the assigned topic under second or foreign language acquisition theoretical framework—interlanguage.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Choice of Words

Upon completion of text analysis of the monologues from the videos of the speaking mid semester test, it turned out that there are eleven words frequently used by the students as represented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Words Frequency Counts

Word	Frequency	Rate per 10K
FOOD	20	41.7
PLACE	18	37.5
AFTER	16	33.3
DAY	16	33.3
GOOD	16	33.3
CHICKEN	15	31.3
FAVORITE	15	31.3
HOME	15	31.3
EXPERIENCE	12	25.0
TIME	12	25.0
UNFORGETTABLE	12	25.0

Table 1 above can be represented in in a cloud form to see how the words are distributed during the course of the speaking exam.

Figure 1. Cloud Form Distribution of Words

Surprisingly, the word 'after' as a function word has been used with a quite high frequency (16) and a rate per 10K. This is possibly due to the type of monologue (recount genre). There has been a mocking phrase "And then-and then English" developed to refer to the use of time conjunction used by entry level EFL students. The phrase clearly reflects word per word translation of the native language—Indonesian, namely '*bahasa Inggris sebatas dan lalu dan kemudian*'.

The words 'day, experience, chicken, home, time, place, food' are all of high frequencies. They may be the words to which the students could refer to describe 'unforgettable memories' as the prescribed topic. It is common for young people to think that 'memories' are limited to something to eat, some places to visit, etc.

The words 'favorite, good, unforgettable' are other words of high frequency uses. They are handy words and easily retrieved for the students' word stocks to give attributes to certain events, special food, or any other memorable references. It can therefore be said that the research subjects (students) are categorized within the elementary level of English proficiency despite the fact that they have completed high schools. Indonesian high schools differ from one to another regarding quality education.

It is probably not surprising since the requirements for student admission to our university are quite low. Entrance tests are not normally given and student canditates from all types of high schools are welcome regardless of the school quality rank. It has been argued (Tsai, 2020) that there are dichotomies in Indoensian High Schools as 'orginary schools', favorite schools, state-owned schools and privately-owned schools. It is all about school quality, effacting how much school fees that students should pay. Tsai's master thesis examined the possibility of 'school zoning' to eradicate dichotomous system of quality education.

Most importantly, the lecturers in our university are not frustrated at all. Instead, they are even challenged to deal with the problems of low quality student inputs, majoring in English Letters (Literature). We have so far been quite happy with our student outputs—with a Bachelor Degree in English Language and Literature and most importantly with a considerable level of English proficiency (B2-Cambridge Profiency) as assigned by English Studies Association in Indonesia (ESAI) and recommended by research (Renandya et al., 2018).

3.2 Readability Analysis

Upon being checked, using a text analyzer software, the readability index is 6.0 within a range of 6,0-easy 20 hard. This implies that the students' utterances are categorized as 'easy'. It is also supported by the average score of 67, which is quite low for the mid semester text—the students failed to get the required passing score of 70 for the mid semester test. Clearly, most of the students made use of function words as opposed to using content words. Meanwhile, there are only a few unique words, and thus not many sophisitcated words—let alone technical words. Presented in Table 2 below is the readibility index.

Table 2. Readibility Index

Element	Value
Total character count	22884
Total Whitespace count	44370
Total word count	4429
Total sentence count	277
Total paragraph count	12
Number of different words	1197
Word variety ratio	27.0%
Readibility (6-easy; 20-hard)	6.0

In other words, the majority of utterances are of simple constructions. Meanwhile the use of meaningless and ungrammatical complex utterances is very high. It can be seen from the longest sentence which does not reflect a well-constructed sentence. This finding confirms a research (Gudu, 2015) in which code switching and other strategies of 'created language' were used. The students were simply forced to talk about something in a foreign language while they had not been ready for such communication encounters. It was suggested that overall reconstruction of the curriculum include the students' cultural background apart from the use of authentic materials to enhance learning processes.

With respect to pronunciation, most students did not perform considerably well as many words were flavored with little bit of their native language sounds—those which are not found in the target language (English). Word Stress and intonation are also still problematic. Unfortunately, the software did not analyze the types of prounciation errors. Instead, only the proportion (%) of pronunciation errors was presented out of all words detected.

3.3 Overall Analysis

Described below are the overall results of the text analysis employing QDA software for text mining as can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Overall Text Analysis of Intelligiility

Category	Code	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases
Chunk	Ungrammatical	96	1740.0%	1	10000.0%
Chunk	Mispronunciation	87	1580.0%	1	10000.0%
Chunk	Meaningless	18	330.0%	1	10000.0%
Strategy	Greeting	9	160.0%	1	10000.0%
Strategy	Gambit	3	50.0%	1	10000.0%
Strategy	Filler	9	160.0%	1	10000.0%
Strategy	Cajoler	15	270.0%	1	10000.0%
Strategy	Repetition	16	290.0%	1	10000.0%
Strategy	Closing	9	160.0%	1	10000.0%
Chunk type	Simple	132	2400.0%	1	10000.0%
Chunk type	Compound	27	490.0%	1	10000.0%
Chunk type	Complex	130	2360.0%	1	10000.0%

It should be noted that QDA software for text mining makes use of prediction per 10 thousand cases—instead of maximum 100% as normally practiced. Therefore, ungrammatical percetage of 1740.0% is referred to as 17.40% (out of 100%). It has been realized from the beginning of the study that the subject size is too small. There was nothing that could be done since it is a case study of one speaking class consisting of ten students.

Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized for different research settings of a similar case. Had this study made use of a bigger size of research subjects, QDA software for text mining would have been able to generate a

model of people talking about 'unforgettable experience' using more varied thematic words to express more complex experiences.

With respect to language chunk, the highest errors index is 'ungrammatical (17.40%)' which is quite unfavorable in terms of proficiency level as opposed to the best of 0%. Similarly, below 'ungrammatical' is 'mispronunciation' of 15.80%, which is quite high, reflecting a low level of intelligibility. Meanings can only be successfullly decoded when they are presented in grammatical and correct pronunciation (spoken) and spelling (written). Therefore, zerro tolerance against grammatical and pronunciation (and spelling) errors has to be stressed.

Most unfavorably, some students committed errors labeled as 'meaningless' (3.30%). It is hard to imagine how difficult it is for both foreign and native speakers of English to understand the intended meanings of spoken monologue with 3.30% meaningless utterances. This is a real institutional challenge to upgrade the students' English proficiency in the next seven semesters. It is of special pride for the lecturers to be able to give special educational treatments. There are many factors responsible for poor English proficiency level, among others including poor vocabulary mastery; cramming habit instead of learning and understanding; mission is to pass the examination not to develop skill, weak sentence structure and tenses, not using the tricks to infer the meaning from context, a lack of reading habit, and of interest in developing English language skills (Iqbal et al., 2015). Each factor must be dealt with accordingly to succeed in teaching EFL in Indonesia, preferably starting from high schools.

Regarding communication strategies, six strategies were identified (by system) to be used by the students, namely greeting, gambit, filler, cajoler, repetition and, closing. In this respect, the results are difficult to interpret due to the fact the use of strategies is relative depending on the contexts of situation and culture.

The use of greeting (1.6%) is sort of hard to judge whether those who employ 'greeting' in monologue telling about 'unforgettable memories' can be considered 'better' than those who do not. Expressing greeting, especially in monologue where a speaker addresses a large number of audience is very much cultural in nature. In Indonesian, giving a public speech has to start with greeting, thanking. In English, Michele Obama, Tony Blair started their public addresses by thanking the audience. We really do not know the case of telling unforgettable memories in EFL while the students' memories were experienced in Indonesian contexts. More specifically, the event occurred in a classroom settings. In the speaking test, the use of greeting was excluded from being scored.

Gambit, filler, cajoler of 0.5%, 1.6% and 2.7% respectively are used purposefully on certain situations. It is therefore difficult to judge. It is assumed that their existence is more important (qualitative) than their counts (quantitative). Similarly, the use of repetition (2.9%) and closing (1.6%) is qualitative in nature, depending on the situation.

Furthermore, with respect to chunk types, it is also difficult to judge. A particular kind of meaning can be expressed in simple, compound or complex utterances, depending on individual perception. Therefore, chunk types are better treated in terms of interlanguage and so is the use of strategies.

3.4 Interlanguage Analysis

In this study, interlanguage was analyzed based on the transcription of the videos performed with the use of Otter Ai Software (online transcription service). Each of the eleven words categorized as 'frequently used is dealt with in terms of interlanguage competence—how they are interlingually used.

3.4.1 The Word 'Food'

The use of the word 'food' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 4.

Table 4. On Using the Word 'Food'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
8	1	I will explain about my favorite FOOD.
9	1	My favorite FOOD is to consolidate.
14	1	That's enough for me to explain about my favorite FOOD.
27	1	the price of FOOD in Bali is different from the price of FOOD in Java.
71	1	chicken and noodles are nice FOOD
77	1	In this video I will describe my favorite FOOD
237	1	spinach opr other vegetables are good FOOD
242	1	I want to tell you about my favorite FOOD.
243	1	My favorite FOOD is FOOD with vegetables
246	1	that fabric FOOD and my family spinach is really good.
252	1	the restaurant always serve home FOOD with Indonesian taste.
256	1	Okay, I think enough for I tell you about my favorite FOOD.

The word 'food' is not quite well-used. In (9), the sentence does not make sense nor does it even when it is situated in any context. It is clear that the student failed to express the intended meaning. It is what is termed as "created language" in which a second or foreign language learner fails to construct the correct linguistic form to express his or her ideas (Chastain, 1976). Other samples of 'created language' are represented in (27), (77) in which they are not spoken according to the grammatical principles of English. The S/FL learner simply puts words at random—possibly being influenced by the native language or untimely process of transfer of traning (not ready to apply what is being learned).

A sample of created language in word level can be seen in (27) in which the phrase 'goat foot' instead of mutton. The student also mispronouncces *foot* (transcribed by software) instead of **food**. It is logical that such a mistake was made since there is no (rarely) word in Indonesian ending in [-d]. Even if it is spelt in –d, it tends to be pronounced as –t as in *abad* [abat]. An absence of sound in the FL will normally be replaced by its counterpart in the NL (Dewi, 2020).

3.4.2 The Word 'Place'

The use of the word 'place' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 5.

Table 5. On Using the Word "Place"

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
77	1	I have bought chicken noodle from my fabric PLACE.
100	1	First one is this PLACE.
101	1	This PLACE is really friendly for everyone.
108	1	But it's it's good that the PLACE is really good and beautiful.
109	1	And to enjoy the sunset in there is absolutely recommend the next PLACE.
110	1	This is the PLACE that I usually visit with my friend.
113	1	It's really friendly PLACE.
124	1	Why are you recommending this this PLACE is literally happened.
182	1	I look for certain googling to another PLACE to another jobs in my country.
189	1	I take jobs in another PLACE as a staff in Unilever.
198	1	There is a sport PLACE for regular jogging
207	1	But I just remembered that my parents took me to the whistle PLACE.
211	1	My house achievement is a second PLACE in the first international kung fu Valley championship.
212	1	First PLACE in earnest National Cup in 2018.
216	1	But I have so poured out of it because I got second PLACE.

252	1	the PLACE it's so very gluten and make me comfortable
295	1	And finally, we arrived at the last PLACE.
313	1	It was a nice PLACE with some rice fields and creeks with clear cold water, too.

From the extract above, the word 'place' is not grammatically and semantically placed to express the intended meaning. Samples of interlanguage 'created language' are represented in (189), (211) in which lack of grammatical competence becomes the central issue. The learner has no grammatical networking to express the ideas. Therefore the sentences are labeled as "meaningless" or "nonsensical". Grammatical rules as required to express the idea are not available yet. Students in such a situation are simply not ready to be forced to produce linguistics forms to generate the intended meaning as required.

It is assumed (not by all though) that the present EFL teaching has been jeopardized by the presence of the so called Communicative Approach (as an approach, not a method nor a technique) This approach stresses on communication, and often ignores grammatical features, and pronunciation of lexical items, which surely contribute to meanings. Proponents of this approach may have forgotten that there is a silent period in the process of language acquisition in which a learner needs nothing but to keep silent to internalize the language systems in order for him or her to be ready to use the language (Bao, 2020).

In time of Audio-lingual Approach, where language structures were drilled over and over in order for the students to have automatic production—not speaking by picking up bits of grammar for the immediate need of communication and some lexical items sometimes wrongly pronounced as pronunciation drills have been left out in the domain of communicative approach. Audio lingual approach stresses on speaking skills without ignorance of the other three language skills (Valdman, 1970).

In (189), a pronunciation mistake is identified as (my) ***ditch*** as transcribed by the software. The real intended word is not known. This can therefore be labeled as 'meaningless'.

3.4.3 The Word 'After'

The use of the word 'after' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 6.

Table 6. On Using the Word "After"

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
25	1	Well, on the way I saw a very nice for you AFTER sunset above the court.
83	1	Okay, AFTER you add some source don't forget to make it okay,
139	1	That's AFTER swimming you can get really tired.
170	1	then AFTER I graduate from high school, I ever joined, or I ever work as sales permission girl.
175	1	But AFTER I come back, I get a lot of learn about many, many knowledge like that.
176	1	And then AFTER that, and then AFTER that.
184	1	And then AFTER I in my home, and then in specifically November 2020.
190	1	I hope AFTER I grade with from only Spain, and then I got opportunity to be flying as a man.
203	1	Actually AFTER three times sugary I don't do much for because I have injury in my knee.
229	1	So this is all my sport that I do regularly AFTER I have sugary for three times.
280	1	Right AFTER we finished our midterm exams, so so it feels like a holiday for us.
282	1	AFTER a tail around famous tourist attractions, we got a very good surprise.
319	1	AFTER jet my Sisters Brothers and I at Eastern it was on the edge of the dam.
326	1	AFTER death, we add some forage and prepare to go home.

It has been somewhat mentioned above that the high frequency of use of the word 'after' is due to the fact that the text is of recount genre with the characteristics of following the time-frame. Most of the sentences are to tell event by event in a chronological order. A grammar mistake in the use of copulative verb can be noticed in (184) which is somehow meaningless in terms of logic. Interlangually speaking, as previously mentioned, the students are not ready yet to express ideas in the TL. It can be seen in the use of sporadic grammatical features as in (190) and (326).

A pronunciation mistake can be identified in (236), the software transcribes the spoken word as (AFTER) ***death*** instead of **that,** which is the intended word. The sound [th] does not exist in Indonesian neither in the initial nor the final positions

3.4.4 The Word 'Day'

The use of the word 'day' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 7.

Table 7. On Using the World 'Day'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
20	1	One DAY vacation in Kuta, Bali is unforgettable experience.
29	1	And the next DAY, I feel like going to a hair salon to lose my hair.
40	1	The festival is unforgettable experience, most precious, persuading. Tha is a big DAY.
52	1	So the first DAY we only spent it in a lodge resting and a nice DAY during the second DAY.
76	1	Have a nice DAY on my My name is Mohammed Paris and I am from the DLC class.
157	1	Have a nice DAY.
210	1	We practice almost every DAY and the training program increase when the competition come.
252	1	you can get it to yes there will be one DAY.
254	1	Yes because we consume vegetables every DAY is so very different.
288	1	And the next DAY we went straight to the first tourist part.
299	1	And the next DAY we arrived in Canal before that we stopped by choker two by seven years.
315	1	we send over there on the last DAY of delivery.
318	1	I'm heavy when I swam older and so people was in their clothes on another DAY and seeing the guys jump from a banyan tree branch into the water.
324	1	And the next DAY.

As can be seen in Table 6 above, the word 'day' is used to identify a moment of event, which is within an elementary usage of proficiency. It is assumed that the students have not learned how to use the word 'day' in more complex contexts, such as describing a process (day by day), a turn-taking (one day after another), alternative event (every other day), etc.

3.4.5 The Word 'Good'

The use of the word 'good' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 8.

Table 8. On Using the Word 'Good'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
44	1	GOOD evening ma'am in them My name is Tanya Hello Maria Monica.
79	1	From the smells very GOOD.
108	1	But it's it's GOOD that the place is really GOOD and beautiful.
140	1	But it sounds GOOD.
192	1	GOOD.
219	1	Because in 2019, I prepare for only US cup, but when I did some jump practice my landed isn't GOOD enough.
231	1	And I don't know why my body feel not GOOD when I'm not move when I'm not do some sport.
241	1	Hey guys GOOD morning.
246	1	Just be nice and spinach with so many ingredients in it like this picture has been much half a carat and sweet corn that's my fabric food and my family spinach is really GOOD.
250	1	this is in in there with a GOOD price like you can get it's with 5000 or 3000 rupiahs.
275	1	We had a GOOD time there and we made a lot of GOOD memories.
282	1	The hotel become one of places that were we very GOOD past rest, after a tail around famous tourist attractions, and we got a very GOOD surprise.

The word 'good' has been used atributively to qualitfy something, eihter directly to form noun phrases, or as predicates of verbal senses (smell, sound), and the word 'good' used as part of greeting (Good evening, Good morning). In other words, the students have not reached the use of the word 'good' in a more variety of structure, such as in 'having a good time, meaning enjoy, or leaving for good, meaning to the end of time, etc. It can therefore be concluded that the students are still in the elementary level of proficiency.

3.4.6 The Word 'Chicken'

The use of the word 'chicken' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 9.

Table 9. On Using the Word 'Chicken'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
71	1	CHICKEN, noodles, noodle, CHICKEN noodle is indonesia delicious food
77	1	In this video I will describe my favorite food. My own special is CHICKEN noodle.
80	1	I can smell the CHICKEN meat and a noodle and I test the gravy.
83	1	oh I got salary here. CHICKEN meat and noodles game It's very delicious.
86	1	My fried CHICKEN noodle.
250	1	We can add carrot, CHICKEN, sausage, macaroni and add other ingredients.
252	1	Add to the CHICKEN some ingredients and sausage.

The word 'chicken' may have been popularized by the business empire of McDonald, KFC, CFC etc., which is somehow to introduce American culture of consuming fast food. They are welcome around the world as favorite restaurants, serving chicken as the main menu. In (71, 72), it is clear that the students have not been able to use the word 'chicken' properly. Sporadic choices of words and structure dominate the texts they produced, only to indicate that they are not ready linguiatically to produce such a complex idea.

3.4.7 The Word "Favorite'

The use of the word 'favorite' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 10.

Table 10. On Using the Word 'Favorite'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
4	1	fried onions, indonesian delicious foods, are my FAVORITE cuisine
8	1	I will explain about my FAVORITE food.
9	1	My FAVORITE food is to consolidate.
14	1	That's enough for me to explain about my FAVORITE food.
77	1	In this video I will describe my FAVORITE food. My own special is chicken noodle. It is economical and becomes my FAVORITE food because it's delicious and cheap.
120	1	And then my FAVORITE last but not least to is this one.
150	1	So yeah, that's all I can tell about my sports, my FAVORITE sport that I come at regularly in my life, and I wish I can do it again.
204	1	But Huso is still my FAVORITE sport.
237	1	spinach, ingredients, vegetables, food, are available at home, they are my FAVORITE
242	1	My name is Sherry, today I want to tell you about my FAVORITE food.
243	1	My FAVORITE food is featured diapers and our food with vegetables in it at my home my family have FAVORITE vegetables is spinach.
252	1	Morales restoran is my FAVORITE restaurant in my hometown.
256	1	Okay, I think enough for I tell you about my FAVORITE food.

Mostly, the word 'favorite' goes attributively to qualify the words 'food' amd 'sport'. It seems that food and sport are of equivalence to memorable items.The word 'favorite' is very suitable to describe something memorable. Siurprisingly it has its Indonesian counterpart of *favorit*. The students found no problems in semantic entity of the word 'favorite'. As has been mentioned, the study used a small number of subjets, resulting in failure to describe the patterns of word choices, including the structure with which words are made into texts.

3.4.8 The Word 'Home'

The use of the word 'home' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 11.

Table 11. On Using the Word 'Home'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
63	1	I'm HOME with the most precious person ever.
161	1	learning, googling, applying knowledge, doing the jobs at HOME are unforgettable experience.
181	1	And then I just can in my HOME can learn in my HOME.
183	1	And I feel bored in my HOME because this COVID I just can set keep, keep myself in my HOME.
184	1	And then after I in my HOME, and then in specifically November 2020.
186	1	And then I come back in my HOME again in 20 2000s.
237	1	spinach, ingredients, vegetables, food, are available at HOME
243	1	My favorite food is featured diapers and our food with vegetables in it at my HOME my family have favorite vegetables is spinach.
250	1	I was buying spinach at the local grocer not too far from my HOME.
252	1	Morales restaurant is my favorite restaurant in my hometown which always serves HOME food with Indonesian.
298	1	We made our way to HOME.
326	1	After death, we add some forage and prepare to go HOME.
327	1	We went HOME to Smyrna in the afternoon.

One pronunciation mistake is again notice as transcribed in 'death' (326) to refer to the word 'that'. The is caused by the absence of the sound /th/ in the NL It further confirms the importance of pronunciation drills to achieve positive transfer of training in the TL.

The word 'home' is confused with the word 'house' as in (161), (186). It is also sporadically used in (237, 243, 252), producing meaningless utterances. In the students' mind, there are complex ideas that they wanted to express in the TL They are simply still below competence to express complex ideas, regarding vocabulary stock and require grammatical features.

3.4.9 The Word 'Experience'

The use of the word 'experience' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 12.

Table 12. On Using the Word Experience'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
20	1	One day vacation in Kuta, Belly, is unforgettable EXPERIENCE
24	1	My EXPERIENCE is that in January, I went on vacation to barely a play.
34	1	It was my first EXPERIENCE, when I visited I only took two days off.
35	1	That's my unforgettable EXPERIENCE.
40	1	The festival is unforgettable EXPERIENCE, most precious, persuading for more stay
46	1	So today for this midterm I'd like to choose one of the topic that is to recall one of my most unforgettable EXPERIENCE to recount if I like to tell the story from when I was impulsively go to Surabaya with my friend for a book festival that that even happened during the second half of 2008 2018.
64	1	I guess that's it, my story my most unforgettable EXPERIENCE.
161	1	learning, googling, applying knowledge, doing the jobs are unforgettable EXPERIENCE.
166	1	And now I want to talk about my unforgettable EXPERIENCE.
167	1	And my unforgettable EXPERIENCE is I want to be like slim for it is my biggest dream when I was a child until now.
214	1	It is also my unforgettable EXPERIENCE, because it's so hard for me because I made the move by myself.

Apparently, the word 'experience' is used as equivalence to the word 'memory'. It can be seen from the majority of attribute 'unforgettable' structured as noun phrases with the word 'experience'. In Indonesia, the word 'memory' can be equally translated as '*kenangan*' as a result of experience (*pengalaman*). Actually, there is a slight semantic difference between the word '*kenangan'* (memory) to describe what one keeps in mind, and the word '*pengalaman*' (experience) to refer to something one did. Thus, the words 'memories' and 'experience' may be confusing.

3.4.10 The Word 'Time'

The use of the word 'time' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 13.

Table 13. On Using the Word 'Time'

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
12	1	Syrah is ranked 14 by the 50 most delicious foods as the most delicious this Alexander because it is very suitable to be eaten at any TIME.
61	1	I'm so happy that I just spend my TIME there.
77	1	In this video I will describe my favorite food talk about afraid food is special food that everyone has that and every TIME we eat that we there is a different feel from the others
147	1	I always visit there for four months until like, Oh my God, my TIME is up right.
250	1	We can add carrot, chicken quills a cake, sausage, macaroni add another ingredients you can make your soup have can being this you know if my mom is not have TIME to go
267	1	So high school was the TIME, that give me a lot of memories.
271	1	Grade, that at that TIME, we went to Bali to do the study Torah thing.
273	1	At that TIME, Indonesia just had one coffee patient, so the government had not implant strict regulations to the tourist attractions.
275	1	We had a good TIME there and we made a lot of good memories.
284	1	That is scary, because it hasn't been used for a while, for a long TIME.
285	1	Before we arrived in Bali, we have to we have to crossed you see both at kilimani Harper, it was very fun because it was my first TIME on a port.
315		There are small stones and expose their teeth refund while the dance the first TIME was used to swim

The word 'time' is somehow systematically used to refer to a specific time (at that time), a possible reflection of their NL (*pada (*at*) waktu (*time*) itu (*that*)). A good native-like performance is also shown in 'We had a good time.' However, the utterance 'every time' as equivalence to 'whenever' can be traced back as a result of NL direct translation, (every (*setiap*) time (*waktu*, *saat*)). The utterance 'for a long time' shows proficient users.

3.4.11 The word 'Unforgettable'

The use of the word 'unforgettable' in the students' utterances can be examined in terms of interlanguage competence, as shown Table 13.

Table 13. On Using the Word 'Unforgettable"

Sentence	Nb hits	Text
20	1	One day vacation in Kuta, Belly, is UNFORGETTABLE experience
35	1	That's my UNFORGETTABLE experience.
40	1	The festival is UNFORGETTABLE experience, most precious, persuading for more stay
46	1	So today for this midterm I'd like to choose one of the topic that is to recall one of my most UNFORGETTABLE experience to recount if I like to tell the story from when I was impulsively go to Surabaya with my friend for a book festival that that even happened during the second half of 2008 2018.
64	1	I guess that's it, my story my most UNFORGETTABLE experience.
161	1	learning, googling, applying knowledge, doing the jobs are UNFORGETTABLE experience.
166	1	And now I want to talk about my UNFORGETTABLE experience.
167	1	And my UNFORGETTABLE experience is I want to be like slim for it is my biggest dream when I was a child until now.
214	1	It is also my UNFORGETTABLE experience, because it's so hard for me because I made the move by myself.
262	1	Bali, hotel, foreign tourists, tourist attractions, friends, happiest moment, room, strict regulations are UNFORGETTABLE memories
266	1	Hello, I'm here to tell you about my UNFORGETTABLE memories.
301	1	And yeah, that was my UNFORGETTABLE memories.

"Unforgettable' in this case is a handy word, that is to say sort of a keyword since the topic is Unforgettable Memories. Therefore, it often goes with the word 'experience' and 'memories'. A number of grammatical features were violated in (167), (214) and (262) as meaningless utterances. It is kind of hard to interpret what the students implied by what they were saying. There is one thing to say about such errors—the students have been trying very hard to express ideas in English as a foreign language in which they are not ready to do so. Therefore, they "created" a language, unacceptable in both the NL and the TL. In (301) the verb agreement was violated, that may be caused by the absence of agreement in the NL. The student may fail to recognize the rule of the TF where a verb has to agree with the sentence subject—something that does not apply in the NL.

Grammatical rules, once introduced to the students, shall not stop there as knowledge. Instead, the teacher has to provide rooms for practice over and over again to achieve automatic production of the correct forms. Feedbacks should be continuously given to improve the students' for language skills through their performance.

An ideal language learner should be equipped with more competence than performance. In other words, competence should be able to control performance to avoid unnecessary violation of language rules. If the students are forced to show off their performance without sufficient competence, the result is more or less 'created language' or meaningless language—with unclassified errors still within the boundary of interlanguage (process of learning occurring between the NL and the TL.

Are English language educators going to ignore this fact—the fact that the students are often forced to perform beyond their competence in the name of communication goals? We may want to look back at how we were educated—with simple chalk and talk but finally we are settled with a considerable mastery of English. We stored information in our brains by memorizing and practicing things as opposed to the current situation where everything is stored in digital devices.

4. Conclusion

Much has been discussed concerning interlanguage theories to come up with unavoidable errors in the performance of the TL which may be the result of the NL influence (negative transfer), on-going processes of learning/acquiring the new language systems during transfer of training, or forced performance for communication (but failed), up to a point of fossilization when one stops to progress. This study shows irregularity or unsystematic errors leading to meaningless language. It is hard to identify which areas within interlanguage domain the students' learning progress is located. In terms of word choices, the students stay within their immediate grasps of words, resulting only eleven most frequently used words. Unfortunately, the words do not represent the actual range of possibility in talking about 'unforgettable memories'. Meaningless utterances are found here and there as counted on a class norm due to being forced to produce utterances while the students are not ready. Only few communication strategies (greeting, gambit, filler, cajoler, repetition, closing) are found but have been functionally much used in terms of text enrichment. The chunk types found are simple, complex and compound sentences with the domination of simple sentences. However, as the data have shown, they are not syntactically well-constructed. This further confirmed that the students were forced to perform something they had not been ready, resulting in "created language".

It is true that interlanguage process of second or foreign language learning may not reflect both the NL and the TL. Sporadic forms are possibly created in attempts to communicate in the TL. It can, therefore, be pedagogically implied that the students are in a dire and pressing need to be equipped with sufficient linguistic competence or communicative competence prior to social and cultural acceptance of performance in any discursive practice (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995), employing the Discourse Approach.

A bigger size of the research subjects is necessary to arrive at the real patterns of talks about 'unforgettable memories' or any other topic of interest. Another research is necessary to highlight the individual errors of the students to arrive at recommendation for remedial teaching. A digital device is badly needed to drill the students to possess automatic correct responses to linguistic phenomena since it is impossible for the students surrounded by digital environments to return to the old ways of language drills like their seniors.

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