

Analysis of Mandarin Syntactic Errors of Indonesian Learners at Elementary Level

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Abstract—This research discusses Mandarin syntactic errors of Indonesian learners, performed at the elementary stage. It aims to categorize errors and identify them. The researchers follow Corder's steps in error analysis. This paper considers four categories of errors: omission, addition, replacement, and disorder. Finally, the researchers seek to explain why the students commit such errors. The results of the data analysis show that most of the syntactic errors are classified as omission errors and disorder errors. These results indicate that the participants relied heavily on their native language to use the target language. Furthermore, their errors reveal that lack of Chinese grammatical knowledge and L1 interference may be significant reasons for their errors. To reduce syntactic errors for students at the elementary stage, teachers should pay more attention to comparing Mandarin and their native language and provide comprehensible input.

Index Terms—Mandarin, syntactic errors, Indonesia learners, elementary level

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the interesting linguistic phenomena to be investigated in second/ foreign language acquisition is learners' errors. Such errors are a valuable and significant resource that can provide teachers with information about the obstacles students encounter and the students' progress in their learning process. If both students and teachers are aware of these errors, the teaching-learning process will be more focused and efficient. In the process of second language acquisition, errors always occur. Based on seven years of teaching experience, the writer finds that many Indonesian Mandarin learners, especially at the elementary school, experience similar syntax errors. For example, Indonesian beginners who learn Mandarin often reverse the position of verbs and adverbs, modifying these verbs. The Indonesian students often make the wrong sentence, such as “我工作在医院。(Wǒ gōngzuò zài yīyuàn.)”, “我吃饭在饭店。(Wǒ chī fàn zài fàn diàn.)”, “我看电影去电影院。(Wǒ kàn diàn yǐng qù diàn yǐng yuàn.)”. These errors happen because of the differences in word order between Mandarin and Indonesian. In Mandarin, the adverbial is placed first, followed by a verb. Moreover, in Indonesian, the verb is placed in front and is followed by an adverbial. According to the theory of Corder (1981), this type of error is called ordering error. Although this error rate decreases with learning progress, it can still not be avoided due to native language interference and the learners' mindset.

Based on this problem, the author would like to analyze Indonesian students' syntax errors in the HSKK (Chinese Proficiency Oral Test for Foreign Learners), describe them, and then provide some suggestions on how to utilize these errors to help both students and teachers achieve their teaching/ learning goals. Students should be informed of their syntax errors, and teachers can tailor activities and assignments to focus on those errors. Through discussion and analysis, Chinese teachers and Chinese Indonesian students can better understand the basic syntax errors of Chinese learners to guide future teaching and learning better.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Second language learners' errors have always been the focus of linguists. Supporters of comparative analysis theory believe that various parts of the two languages (mother language and second language) will be more difficult for second language learners to master, while the same elements will be easier to master (Lado, 1957; Dan & Septevany, 2020;

Djahimo, 2020; Dan et al., 2021). Comparative analysis is a method to determine potential errors by comparing different languages (such as first language and second language) to finally distinguish what must be learned from what does not need to be learned in the second language learning environment. The comparative analysis aims to predict which areas are easy to learn and not easy to learn. Error analysis theory supports that errors are second language learners' errors, which refer to the unconscious deviation of second language learners from the target language when using the language (James, 1998; Taylor, 1986; Lu et al., 2021). They are errors or imperfections based on the target language. This error is systematic and regular, reflecting the speaker's language ability and belongs to the category of language ability.

There are two terms in the study of second language learning, namely error and mistake; Mistake refers to performance errors that are random or slip on the tongue. It is just a failure to use a well-known system. Everyone can make mistakes, either for the native speakers or the second language learners (Dulay et al., 1982). Mistakes are not the result of a lack of competence, but interference in the production process, and the speakers can identify and correct them. Errors can reflect the transitional learning competence. It is a systematic error of a learner who does not understand the rules of the target language. Students cannot repair their errors themselves because these errors are products that reflect their current L2 development stage or their underlying competencies (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Many scholars are interested in errors made by Indonesian Chinese learners, and they have conducted much meaningful research. However, through the investigation, we find that there are not many papers that comprehensively analyze the syntax errors and word use errors of Indonesian students, and most of them focus on a specific problem in grammar. For example, Chen made a unique comparative study of the characteristics, similarities, and differences of the basic word order between Indonesian and Chinese and analyzed the typical word order errors in Indonesian students' Chinese acquisition. It is a masterpiece studying Chinese word order and Indonesian word order (Chen, 2002). Lisha systematically classifies the syntactic errors in the students' compositions and makes a statistical analysis of the data of the errors to help people better understand the current situation of syntactic errors in the students' Chinese writing (Lisha, 2014); According to Han (2019) attempts to investigate the errors in the acquisition of Chinese pronouns by Indonesian students whose Chinese proficiency is below intermediate level. The research of Xia is based on HSK dynamic composition corpus, combined with semantic types and syntactic structure, analyzes the types of error corpus, and expounds the typical use cases to have a more comprehensive understanding of the omission errors of “是 shi” sentences by foreign students (Xia, 2021). The research of Fu (2015) is based on second language acquisition theories and an interlanguage to explore the types of errors and the causes of errors in foreign students' acquisition of “verb-coping sentences” at the preliminary, intermediate, and advanced levels. According to Ji (2012), there are many types of errors in the process of Indonesian students' Chinese acquisition, such as missing syntactic components, wrong word order, improper use of words or collocations, wrong addition, inappropriate use, and harmful errors, and others. Among them, the missing components and wrong order are particularly prominent. The reason is that there are apparent differences in word order and expression between Chinese and Indonesian, which can easily cause a negative transfer to students; In addition, Chinese auxiliary words, conjunctions, adverbs, and other components with virtual meaning are more complex, which is difficult for students to master. According to Jin (1997) paper focus on the process of learners' acquisition of the negative structure with 不 bù (do not) and 没 mǎi (have not) and tries to discover the acquisition order of the two structures.

This research is different from the previous studies. Previous research focuses on the writing format, but this research focuses on speaking errors at the primary level. Therefore, this research can supplement the deficiency of prior studies and better present the syntactic errors of Indonesian students who learn Mandarin at the primary level. The current study aims to show the main categories of syntactic errors of Indonesian Mandarin learners at their basic level, describe the source of errors, and suggest to the mandarin teachers and students.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a quantitative and qualitative method. Quantitative analysis studies the types of syntactic errors of Indonesian Mandarin Beginners in the basic HSKK test script. Qualitative research aims to discuss the source of these syntactic errors.

A. Sample and Participants

The sample of this study is taken from the recording of the basic HSKK test script. There are twelve question manuscripts taken randomly in the basic HSKK exam manuscript. This sample can be seen in Figure (1-4). Then the author processes these twelve forms of questions by distributing them to eighty-seven respondents who Indonesian learners at the primary level are.

B. Instruments

The equipment used in this study is the google form answered by the students in Confucius Institute at Hasanuddin University and the students in Politeknik Negeri Bali.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection technique uses the purposive sampling technique, which takes data samples with specific considerations (Sugiyono, 2017). The data collection of this study has three steps. Firstly, the samples are taken from a basic HSKK test. There are twelve error expressions of Indonesian Mandarin beginners with high frequency in basic HSKK tests. The second step is to distribute questionnaires to eighty-seven respondents of Indonesian Mandarin beginners by reprocessing these twelve expressions. The last step is to analyze the data using Corder's error analysis steps.

According to Corder (1981), there are five steps in error analysis: The collection of a sample of learners' language, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and the last is evaluation of errors.

Dulay claims four types of syntactic errors were discussed in their research: syntactic errors of omission, syntactic errors of addition, syntactic errors of selection, and syntactic errors of ordering (Dulay et al., 1982).



Figure 1. Omission Error

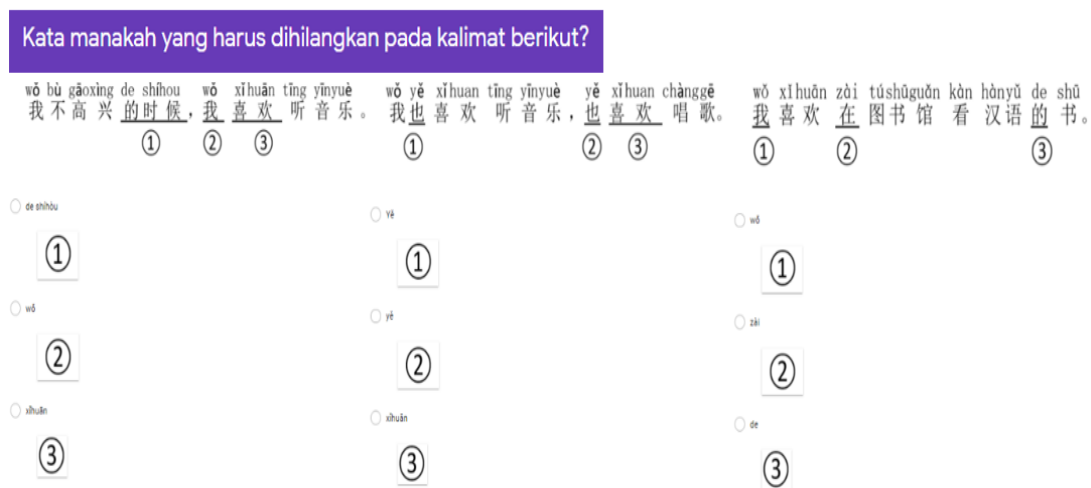


Figure 2. Addition Error

Menurut Anda, kata manakah yang tidak cocok digunakan dalam kalimat berikut.

我每天学习汉语，。。。我还不会说汉语。 Wǒ měitiān xuéxí hànyǔ, ... wǒ hái bù huì shuō hànyǔ. *

ránhòu

bùguò

dànsì

每天我都看电视。。。看书。 Měitiān wǒ dōu kàn diànshì... kànshū. *

háishi

yě

huòzhě

我喜欢看电影，... 是喜欢看美国电影。 Wǒ xǐhuān kàn diànyǐng.... Shì xǐhuān kàn měiguó diànyǐng. *

wó

tèbié

zōngshì

Figure 3. Selection Error

Susunlah kalimat di bawah ini menjadi kalimat yang benar!

1在大学 2每天 3学习 4汉语 5我 1Zài dàxué 2měitiān 3xuéxí 4hànyǔ 5wǒ *

52341

52134

25341

15234

1我 2才 3说 4可以 5汉语 1wǒ 2cái 3shuō 4kěyǐ 5hànyǔ *

12435

14352

14235

12345

1.我 2.很多 3.看 4.中国 5.电影 1.wǒ 2.hěnduō 3.kàn 4.Zhōngguó 5.diànyǐng *

12345

13245

13254

24513

Figure 4. Disordering Error

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are four types of syntactic errors that appear in the Basic Oral Chinese Proficiency Test (basic HSKK): syntactic errors of omission, syntactic errors of addition, syntactic errors of selection, and syntactic errors of ordering. In the following text, four types of syntactic errors will be discussed one by one.

A. Errors of Omission

Syntactic errors of omission are errors where some syntactic elements are omitted (which should be present). It is called an incomplete component if it does not meet the ellipsis condition and the lack of the required component, which causes incomplete sentence structure and unclear expression. Incomplete components consist of the missing subject, predicates objects, attributive, and adverbial (Borong & Xudong, 2017). There are three examples of omissions made by Indonesian students who have just learned Mandarin less than one year.

(1) Sentence *我爱看书的人。 Wǒ ài kàn shū de rén (I like reading person).

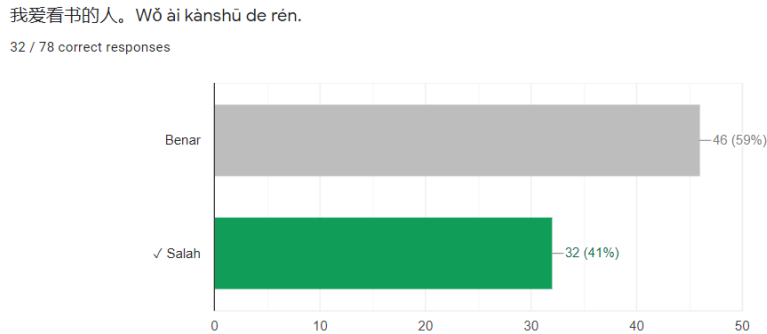


Figure 5. Rating Result of Wǒ ài kànshū de rén

Figure 5 shows that from seventy-eight respondents, forty-six respondents responded wrong, or in other words, 59% of students chose the false expression. From Table 1 below, we can see where they are wrong. The sentence “我爱看书的人 wǒ ài kàn shū de rén” is lack of the predicate “是 shì” and the determiner “一个 yí gè”. The correct sentence is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SENTENCE “Wǒ SHÌ YÍ GÈ ÀI KÀN SHŪ DE RÉN”

我是一个爱看书人						
我	是	一个	爱	看书	的	人。
Wǒ	shì	yí gè	ài	kànshū	de	rén
I	am	a	like	reading	that	person.

In the Indonesian system, the sentence “Saya orang yang suka membaca (I am a person who loves reading)” is acceptable and can be understood by the Indonesian. This syntactic omission happened because of L1 interference. In other words, Indonesian learners always use the Indonesian language logic to produce Mandarin sentences. Table 1 above shows that the verb “是 shì” must be in a sentence to describe or amplify the subject that the one who loves to read books is “me”.

(2) Sentence *我每天学习汉语。 Wǒ měi tiān xuéxí Hànyǔ (I everyday learn Mandarin).

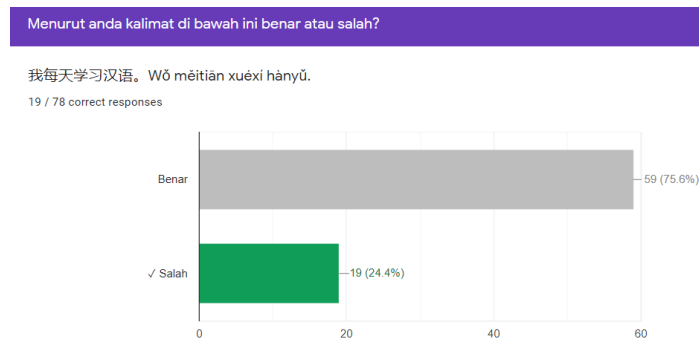


Figure 6. Rating Result of Wǒ měitiān xuéxí Hànyǔ.

Figure 6 shows that out of the seventy-eight respondents, fifty-nine students regard the wrong sentence as right, and the error rate is 75.6%. The source of this error is also the negative transfer of the learner's native language. Thus, L1 interference cannot be avoided in learning a second language. The correct expression of this sentence is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
SENTENCE “WŌ MĚI TIĀN DŌU XUÉXÍ HÀNYŪ”
我每天都学习汉语。

我	每天	都	学习	汉语。
Wǒ	měitiān	dōu	xuéxí	Hànyǔ
I	every day	all	learn	Mandarin.

Table 2 shows that when the time noun “每天 měitiān (every day)” presents in a sentence, it is usually followed by the adverb “都 dōu” which means an action always appears continuously. For example, the sentence “Wǒ měitiān dōu xuéxí Hànyǔ” implies that “I learn Mandarin every day”. The learning Mandarin activity is carried out every day without interruption. In the Mandarin system, some special words that mean all without exception often appear together with the adverb 都 dōu (always without exception), such as 每 měi (every), 各 gè (each), 所有 suǒyǒu (all), 一切 yīqiè (everything), 全部 quántǐ (whole), 这些 zhèxiē (these), 那些 nàxiē (those), 随时 suíshí (whenever), 到处 dàochù (wherever), and 任何 rěnhé (whatever).

(3) Sentence *我喜欢听音乐一边睡觉。 Wǒ xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè yībiān shuìjiào (I like listening to music while sleeping).

我喜欢听音乐一边睡觉。 Wǒ xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè yībiān shuìjiào.

23 / 78 correct responses

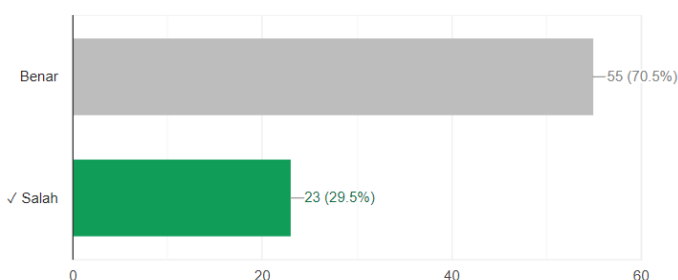


Figure 7. Rating Result of Wǒ xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè yībiān shuìjiào.

Figure 7 shows that from the seventy-eight respondents, there are fifty-five respondents, or about 70.5% regard the wrong sentence as right. This result indicates that Indonesian students at the elementary level do not understand the usage of the conjunction “yī biān...yībiān...” which means “while” that indicates that two actions are performed at the same time. Table 3 shows the correct expression.

TABLE 3
SENTENCE WŌ XǏHUĀN YĪBIĀN TĪNG YĪNYUÈ YĪBIĀN SHU JIÀO
我喜欢一边听音乐一边睡觉。

我	喜欢	一边	听音乐	一边	睡觉。
Wǒ	xǐ huān	yī biān	tīng yīnyuè	yī biān	shu jìào
I	like	while	listening to music	while	sleeping.

The conjunction “yībiān...yībiān...” is a relative adverb in Mandarin. This adverb can be put in front of a verb to indicate two actions simultaneously. They are just like a pair of twins, and they always appear simultaneously.

B. Errors of Addition

Syntactic errors of addition are errors where some syntactic elements are present (which should not be there). Here are three examples of other errors made by Indonesian students who have just learned Mandarin less than one year.

(4) Sentence *我不高兴的时候我喜欢听音乐。 Wǒ bù gāoxìng de shíhòu wǒ xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè (When I am not happy, I like listening to the music).

31 / 78 correct responses

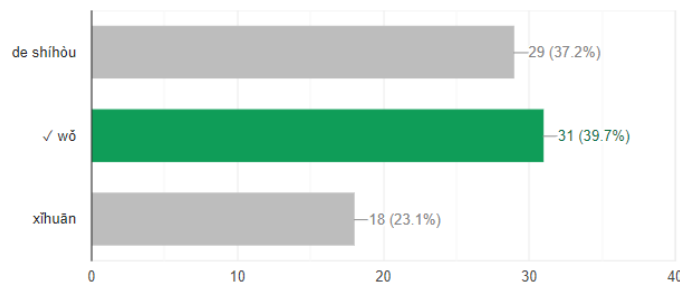


Figure 8. Rating Result of Wǒ bù gāoxìng de shíhòu wǒ xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè

Figure 8 shows that forty-seven respondents, or 60.3% of the seventy-eight respondents, failed to find the redundant syntactic components. This phenomenon indicates that Indonesian students at the elementary level are not good enough to master the usage of subjects in slightly more complex sentences. Table 4 shows the correct expression.

TABLE 4
SENTENCE Wǒ BÙ GĀOXÌNG DE SHÍHÒU XǐHUĀN TĪNG YĪNYUÈ

我不高兴的时候喜欢听音乐。

我	不	高兴	的时候	喜欢	听音乐
Wǒ	bù	gāo xìng	de shí hòu	xǐ huān	yīnyuè
I	not	happy	when	like	listen to the music

Table 4 shows that subjects “我 wǒ” is wrongly used twice (where it should have been used once). There is only one set of SVO (我-喜欢-听音乐 wǒ-xǐhuān-tīng yīnyuè) in the sentence “我不高兴的时候喜欢听音乐。 Wǒ bù gāoxìng de shíhòu xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè”, so it is enough to use one subject “我 wǒ” which can be placed at the beginning of the sentence or in front of the verb “喜欢 xǐhuān”. The correct expression can be “我不高兴的时候喜欢听音乐 Wǒ bù gāoxìng de shíhòu xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè” or “不高兴的时候我喜欢听音乐 bù gāoxìng de shíhòu wǒ xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè”. The phrase “不高兴的时候 bù gāoxìng de shí” means “when (I am) not happy”, and its function in this sentence is adverbial of time. Adverbial time is usually allocated in front of the subject or behind the subject, and there is no need to add the subject as expressed in English.

(5) Sentence *我喜欢在图书馆看汉语的书。 Wǒ xǐhuān zài túshūguǎn kàn Hànyǔ de shū (I like in the library read Mandarin books).

35 / 78 correct responses

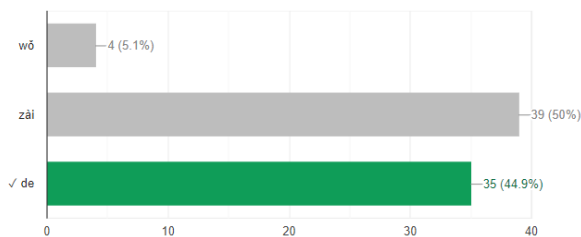


Figure 9. Rating Result of Wǒ xǐhuān zài túshūguǎn kàn Hànyǔ de shū

Figure 9 shows that out of seventy-eight respondents, forty-three respondents (55.1%) wrongly used the auxiliary word “的 de”. “的 de” is an auxiliary verb frequently used in Chinese. The basic grammatical meaning of the auxiliary “的 de” is the sign of attribute, which is used in the noun phrase of “attributive + central word” structure. If it means that an object belongs to someone, it must use “的 de” such as “我的书 wǒ de shū (my book)”, “妈妈的手机 māma de shǒujī (mom’s handphone)”, “他的杯子 tā de bēizi (his cup)”. However, if it means the nature of an object, it can be left out “的 de”, such as “汉语书 Hànyǔ shū (Mandarin books)”, “中国电影 Zhōngguó diànyǐng (Chinese movies)”, “中国朋友 Zhōngguó péngyǒu (Chinese friends)”, “Zhōngguó cài (中国菜 Chinese food)”. These nominal phrases have no ambiguity and no need to add the auxiliary verb “的 de”. The noun phrase “汉语的书 Hànyǔ de shū” is wrongly added after the attributive of describing nature. For the Indonesian Mandarin beginners, because the usage of “的 de” is not yet fully understood by them and overgeneralization of Mandarin rules, they often add the auxiliary word “的 de” at where don’t need it. The correct expression is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
SENTENCE WŌ XǐHUĀN ZÀI TÚSHŪGUǎN KÀN HÀNYŪ SHŪ
我喜欢在图书馆看汉语书。

我	喜欢	在	图书馆	看	汉语书。
Wǒ	xǐ huān	zài	tú shū guǎn	kàn	Hànyǔ shū.
I	like	in	library	read	Mandarin book.

(6) Sentence *我也喜欢听音乐我也喜欢唱歌。Wǒ yě xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè wǒ yě xǐhuān chànggē (I also like listening to the music I also like singing).

46 / 78 correct responses

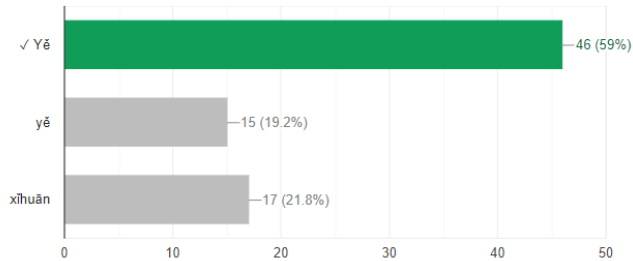


Figure 10. Rating Result of Wǒ Yě xǐhuān tīng yīnyuè, wǒ yě xǐhuān chànggē

Figure 10 shows that out of seventy-eight respondents, there are thirty-two (41%) respondents wrongly use the adverb “也 yě “that means “also”. On the other hand, forty-six (59%) respondents choose the right answer. This phenomenon shows that the adverb “也 yě (also)” is easy to understand by students at their elementary.

TABLE 6
SENTENCE WŌ XǐHUĀN TĪNG YĪNYUÈ YĒ XǐHUĀN CHÀNGGĒ
我喜欢听音乐也喜欢唱歌

我	喜欢	听音乐,	也	喜欢	唱歌。
Wǒ	xǐ huān	tīng yīnyuè,	yě	xǐhuān	chànggē.
I	like	listening to the music,	also	like	singing.

Table 6 shows that there are two hobbies of “我 wǒ (I)”, one is “听音乐 tīng yīnyuè (listen to the music)”, the other one is “唱歌 chànggē (sing)”. Due to the adverb “也 yě” means “also”, it can not be used before the first verb phrase but before the second verb phrase, and there is no need to use it twice.

C. Errors of Selection

Syntactic errors of selection are errors where the wrong syntactic item has been chosen in place of the right one. Here are three examples that are taken from the basic HSKK test.

(7) Sentence “我每天学习汉语, ... 我还不会说汉语。Wǒ měitiān xuéxí Hànyǔ, ... wǒ hái bù huì shuō Hànyǔ. (I learn Chinese every day, ... I still cannot speak Chinese).

42 / 78 correct responses

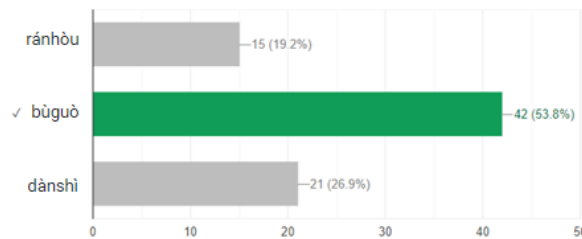


Figure 11. Rating Result of Wǒ měitiān xuéxí Hànyǔ,wǒ hái bù huì shuō Hànyǔ

Figure 11 shows that fifteen (19.2%) respondents choose the wrong answer out of seventy-eight respondents. It shows that already 70.8% of students had understood the use of the adversative conjunctions “不过 bùguò” and “但是 dànshì”. The correct sentence can be seen in Table 7.

TABLE 7
SENTENCE WŌ MĚITĪĀN DŌU XUÉXÍ HÀNYŪ, BÚGUÒ/ DÀNSHÌ WŌ HÁI BÚ HUÌ SHUŌ HÀNYŪ
我每天都学习汉语,不过/但是我还会说汉语。

我	每天	都	学习	汉语,	不过/但是	我	还	不会	说汉语。
Wŏ	měitiān	dōu	xuéxí	Hànyǔ,	búguò/dànshì	wŏ	hái	bùhuì	shuō Hànyǔ.
I	everyday	always	learn	Mandarin,	but	I	still	cannot	speak Mandarin.

In a sentence, when the meaning of the first half-sentence and the second half-sentence is contradictory, the adversative conjunctions need to be used in the second half-sentence. For example, the sentence “我每天都学习汉语, 不过/ 但是我还会说汉语。 Wŏ měitiān dōu xuéxí Hànyǔ, bú guò/ dànshì wŏ hái bú huì shuō Hànyǔ” means “I learn Mandarin every day, but I still can not speak Mandarin.” Therefore, this sentence is suitable for using the adversative conjunction “不过 bú guò” or “但是 dànshì” which means “but”. Figure 11 shows that most of the Indonesian students already know the rules of the conjunctions “不过 bú guò” and “但是 dànshì”, but 19.2% of students are still confused about it.

(8) Sentence 每天我都看电视...看书。 Měitiān wŏ dōu kàn diànshì...kàn shū. (Every day I watch TV... read books).

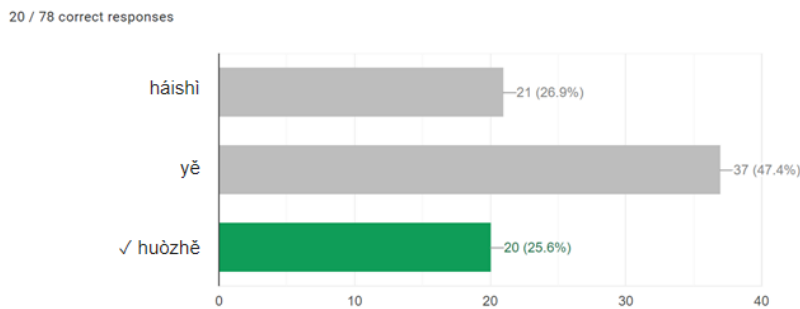


Figure 12. Rating Result of Měitiān wŏ dōu kàn diànshì ... kànshū

Figure 12 above shows that from seventy-eight respondents, there were fifty-eight respondents or 52.2% of students who answered incorrectly. It indicates that Indonesian students do not understand the conjunctive word “huòzhě” rules. The correct sentences can be seen in Table 8 below. The word “huòzhě” is an adverb. It is used in a declarative sentence. In Table 8, it shows that the activities carried out every day have two options, namely “kàn diànshì watching TV” or “kànshū reading a book”. So, the proper use of the conjunction is “huòzhě”. The conjunction “háishi” is used to indicate a choice, while the conjunction “huòzhě” is used in a statement sentence to choose. It is what causes many mistakes because they do not know when to use the conjunction “háishi” or “huòzhě”.

TABLE 8
SENTENCE MĚITĪĀN WŌ DŌU KÀN DIÀNSHÌ HUÒZHĒ KÀNSHŪ
每天我都看电视或者看书

每天	我	都	看电视	或者	看书。
Měitiān	wŏ	dōu	kàn diànshì	huòzhě	kànshū.
Everyday	I	always	watch TV	or	reading.

(9) 我喜欢看电影, ... 是喜欢看美国电影。 Wŏ xǐhuān kàn diànyǐng ... shì xǐhuān kàn Měiguó diànyǐng. (I like watching films, ... like American films).

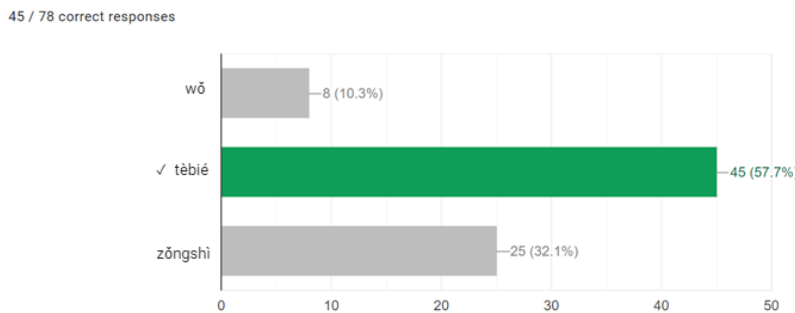


Figure 13. Rating Result of Wŏ xǐhuān kàn diànyǐng, xǐhuān kàn měiguó diànyǐng

Figure 13 shows that out of seventy-eight respondents, thirty-three (42.3%) respondents had chosen the wrong answer. In this case, the student wants to express, “I like watching movies, especially American movies”. As an adverb

of degree, “especially”, can be translated to “特别 tèbié” not “总是 zǒngshì (always) in Chinese”. It shows that some Indonesian learners have not understood the rules for using an adverb of degree “特别 tèbié”, they misused frequency adverbs “总是 zǒngshì (always)” instead of degree adverbs. The correct sentence can be seen in Table 9.

TABLE 9
SENTENCE WŌ XǐHUĀN KĀN DIÀNYǐNG TÈBIÉ SHĪ XǐHUĀN KĀN MĒIGUÓ DIÀNYǐNG
我喜欢看电影,特别是喜欢看美国电影

我	喜欢	看	电影,	特别是	喜欢	看	美国电影.
Wŏ	xǐhuān	kàn	diànyǐng,	tèbié shì	xǐhuān	kàn	Měiguó diànyǐng.
I	like	watch	film,	especially	like	watch	American film.

D. Errors of Ordering

Syntactic errors of order where the syntactic elements presented are correct but wrongly sequenced. Here are three examples of error expressions made by Indonesian Mandarin learners when they answer a basic HSKK test.

(10) Sentence *我每天学习汉语在大学。Wŏ měitiān xuéxí Hànyǔ zài dàxué (I every day learn Mandarin at university).

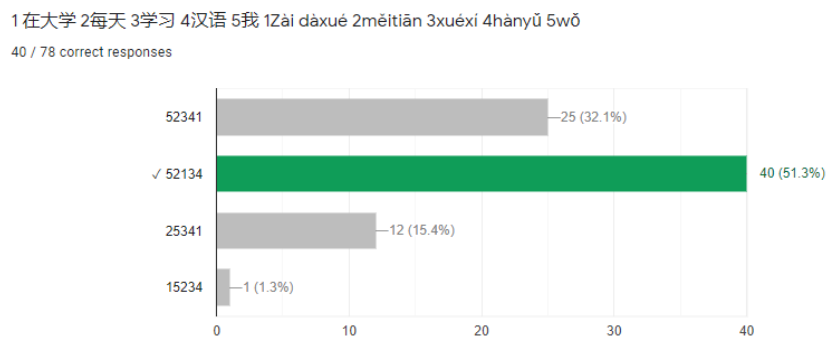


Figure 14. Rating Result of Wŏ měitiān xuéxí Hànyǔ zài dàxué

Figure 14 shows that out of seventy-eight respondents, thirty-eight (or 48.7%) respondents answered incorrectly. It shows that some Indonesian Mandarin learners have not mastered the word order of verbs, and they place it in the adverbial. There are twenty-five learners who choose the “52341” model, which is “Wŏ měitiān xuéxí Hànyǔ zài dàxué”. When translated into Indonesian, that is “Saya setiap hari belajar bahasa Mandarin di Universitas”, which means “Everyday I study Mandarin in university”. This sentence pattern is acceptable in Indonesian. There are twenty-five Indonesian learners who choose this model. In addition, there are twelve and one respondents who choose the type “25341” and “15234”, respectively. Word order plays a crucial role in Chinese. The adverbials must precede verbs in Chinese. Table 10 shows the correct sentence.

TABLE 10
SENTENCE WŌ MĒITIĀN ZAI DÀXUÉ XUÉXÍ HÀNYǔ
我每天在大学学习汉语

我	每天	在大学	学习	汉语。
Wŏ	měitiān	zài dàxué	xuéxí	Hànyǔ.
I	everyday	at university	learn	Mandarin.

(11) Sentence *我可以才说汉语。Wŏ kěyǐ cái shuō Hànyǔ. (I can just speak Mandarin).

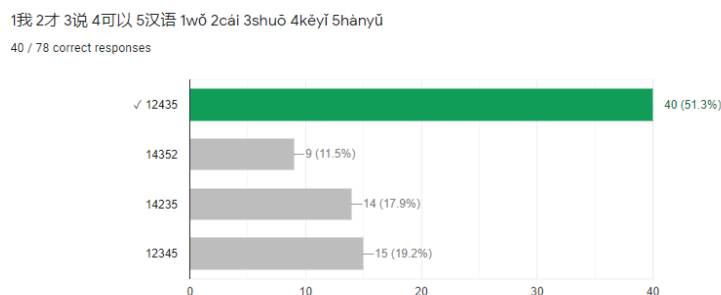


Figure 15. Rating Result of Wŏ kěyǐ cái shuō Hànyǔ

Figure 15 above shows that out of seventy-eight respondents, thirty-eight (or 48.7%) respondents choose the wrong answer. It shows that some Indonesian learners have not mastered the word order of two consecutive adverbs. The adverb “才 cái” means “just”, and the adverb “可以 kěyǐ” means “can”. When it put both together, the adverb “才 cái” must be placed before the adverb “kěyǐ” indicating that “just can”. At the beginning of the learning process, Indonesian Mandarin learners do not understand the difference between the two adverbs, nor do they know their order. The correct sentence is “我可以 说汉语。 Wǒ cái kěyǐ shuō Hànyǔ” that means “I can just speak Mandarin”.

TABLE 11
SENTENCE WÓ CÁI KĒYǏ SHUŌ HÀNYŪ
我可以 说汉语

我	才	可以	说	汉语
Wǒ	cái	kě yǐ	shuō	Hànyǔ
I	Has/ just	can	speak	Mandarin.

(12) Sentence *我很多看中国电影。 Wǒ hěn duō kàn Zhōngguó diànyǐng. (I watch many Chinese movies).

1.我 2.很多 3.看 4.中国 5.电影 1.wǒ 2.hěnduō 3.kàn 4.Zhōngguó 5.diànyǐng
31 / 78 correct responses

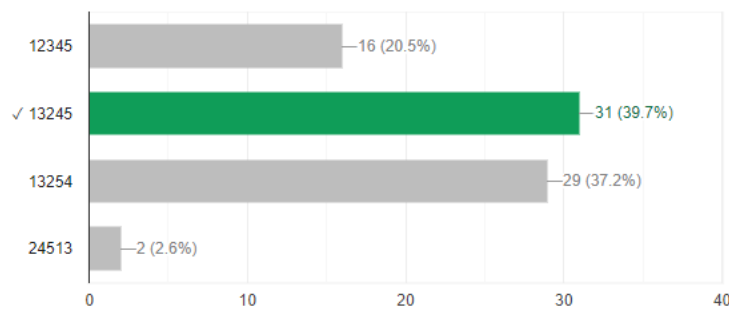


Figure 16. Rating Result of Wǒ hěnduō kàn zhōngguó diànyǐng

Figure 16 shows that out of seventy-eight respondents, just 31(or 39.7%) respondents chose the correct answer. In contrast, forty-seven learners (or 60.3%) answered incorrectly. It shows that the sentence above is considered exceedingly difficult for Indonesian Mandarin learners. In their elementary period, Indonesian learners are still confused about the order of the adverbs and the verbs. Therefore, the correct expression will be the sentence in Table 12 below.

TABLE 12
SENTENCE WÓ KÀN (LE) HĒNDUŌ ZHŌNGGUÓ DIÀNYǏNG
我看(了)很多中国电影

我	看(了)	很多(次)	中国	电影
Wǒ	kàn (le)	hěnduō (ci)	Zhōngguó	diànyǐng
I	have watched	many(times)	Chinese	movies

Table 12 shows that in the sentence “我看了很多(次)中国电影 Wǒ kàn (le) hěnduō (cì) Zhōngguó diànyǐng (I had watched many (times) Chinese movies)”, the adjective “很多 hěnduō (many)” is used to modify the noun “中国电影 Zhōngguó diànyǐng (Chinese movies)”, not to modify the verb “看 kàn (watch)”, so that the adjective “很多 hěnduō (many)” must be placed in front of “中国电影 Zhōngguó diànyǐng (Chinese movies), not in the front of “看 kàn (watch)”.

A table can be drawn from the above analysis to conclude the average syntactic errors rate for Indonesian Mandarin beginners, as shown in Table 13. In Chinese, syntactic elements include subject, predicate, object, attribute, adverbial, and complement. Therefore, the syntactic errors of Indonesian Mandarin beginners mostly appear in attribute, adverbial, and complement.

TABLE 13
SYNTACTIC ERRORS

The type of syntactic error	Sentence	Syntactic elements	The rate of error	The average rate of error
Errors of Omission	1	predicate	59%	68.4%
	2	adverbials	75.6%	
	3	conjunction	70.5%	
Errors of Addition	4	subject	60.3%	52.1%
	5	attribute	55.1%	
	6	adverbial	41%	
Errors of Selection	7	conjunction	19.2%	45.3%
	8	conjunction	74.4%	
	9	adverbial	42.3%	
Errors of Ordering	10	adverbial	48.7%	52.6%
	11	adverbial	48.7%	
	12	adverbial	60.3%	

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, by investigating Indonesian learners on the mastery of Mandarin sentences through the basic oral Chinese test (basic HSKK), we can conclude that Indonesian Mandarin learners at their elementary stage are easier to master the sentences with the simple SVO pattern. In contrast, slightly more complex sentences, such as sentences consisting of two verbs, two adverbs, the clauses expressing time and place, or conjunctions, are more likely to make errors of omission, addition, selection, and disordering. The errors of omission, addition, and disordering all account for a substantial proportion, respectively accounting for 68.4%, 52.6%, and 52.1%. The sources of these syntactic errors can be multidimensional. It can be due to the negative transfer of the native language, the overgeneralization of target language rules, the inherent language thinking habits, or the differences between the two cultures. Second language teachers must be highly aware of these errors in the teaching process and then give the students comprehensible knowledge to reduce the frequency of these errors, to help students quickly master Mandarin and deeply understand the linguistic rules and pragmatic connotations behind the language.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the publisher for reviewing and accepting this paper.

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