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Unveiling linguistic inference dynamics: native language influences on *bahasa Indonesia* acquisition among Filipino BIPA learners

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a b s t r a c t

This research investigates the intricate process of linguistic inference exhibited by *bahasa Indonesia* bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) learners from the Philippines. The study delves into the interplay between the learners' native language influences and the structural elements of *bahasa Indonesia*, focusing on morphology and syntax. Over six months, involving 25 participants, this research identifies and categorizes dimensions of linguistic inference, revealing adaptive strategies deployed by learners during their language acquisition journey. The exploration is anchored in the concept that second language acquisition involves a cognitive process of decoding morphology and syntax, influenced by both linguistic universals and language-specific features. By examining themes such as native language morphological adaptation, transfer of sentence structures, and the interplay between linguistic universals and language-specific elements, the study uncovers the evolution of inferential strategies over time. Additionally, it addresses the challenges learners encounter and how they adapt to enhance their linguistic skills. Findings illuminate the developmental trajectory of inferential strategies, bridging theoretical gaps in the discourse of second language acquisition and offering insights for curriculum design and pedagogical practices. The research contributes to understanding the dynamic process of linguistic inference, enriching discussions on morphosyntactic acquisition and cross-linguistic influences in language learning.

Introduction

Language acquisition represents a complex process through which learners unravel the intricate structural nuances of a new language. Within the diverse linguistic landscapes, the journey of *bahasa Indonesia* bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) learners, particularly those originating from the Philippines, offers an intriguing opportunity to delve into the mechanisms of linguistic inference, specifically within morphology and syntax. This research aims to explore the profound process of linguistic inference demonstrated by elementary-level BIPA learners, uncovering the interplay between their native language influences and the structural aspects of *bahasa Indonesia*.

Over a of six months, involving 25 participants, this study reveals and categorizes the dimensions of linguistic inference. This provides insights into the adaptive strategies employed by learners as they navigate the linguistic terrain. As Chaer (1995) suggests, acquiring *bahasa Indonesia* involves tapping into existing linguistic knowledge to decode its morphology and syntax. This process goes beyond mere rote learning, encompassing the cognitive aspects of linguistic inference, as explained by the theoretical framework posited by O'Grady et al. (2011). According to this theory, learners engage in a dynamic interplay between their native language structures and the structural patterns of the target language as an integral process for adapting and internalizing new linguistic features. BIPA learners draw upon their native language structures, engaging in a dynamic interplay between familiar patterns and novel linguistic elements. This interplay, influenced by both inherent linguistic universals (Chomsky, 1986) and language-specific features (Song, 2016), forms the foundation of linguistic inference. This research delves into this intricate process, focusing on how BIPA learners perceive and bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar, enriching our understanding of second language acquisition dynamics.

Through an analytical lens, this study aims to highlight the developmental trajectory of BIPA learners' inferential strategies, as they traverse the evolving terrain of morphology and syntax. The theoretical principles of linguistic inference suggest that as learners progress in their language journey, they transition from direct pattern transfers to more context-driven inferences. While prior studies like Ibrahim (2001) have examined linguistic inference among second language learners, a gap remains in research specifically addressing the developmental trajectory of inferential strategies among BIPA learners from the Philippines. Through an in-depth exploration of linguistic inference within this specific group, this study aligns with the pedagogical goals of educators and policymakers. Through analysis, it highlights the developmental trajectory of learners navigating the evolving landscape of morphology and syntax. The insights gained from their journey have the potential to shape curriculum design, instructional methodologies, and language teaching strategies, as Tomlinson (2013) suggests.

In addition, Shintani's (2018) research explored the impact of L1 transfer on formulaic language acquisition by Japanese EFL learners. Findings indicated that transfer of formulaic sequences from the native language facilitated fluency. This underscores the role of cross-linguistic influence in formulaic language development. Similarly, Park and Lakshmanan's (2018) experimental study demonstrated Korean EFL learners' reliance on L1 morphological knowledge when processing English derivational morphology, evidencing L1 transfer in morphological inferencing during L2 word recognition. Furthermore, Zhang and Wen's (2021) chapter reviewed empirical research on L2 vocabulary acquisition, showcasing transfer's facilitative and limiting effects on learners' L1 lexical knowledge. They emphasize the need for an expanded theoretical perspective encompassing cross-linguistic influence. Liu and Zhong's (2022) study of Chinese EFL learners established a correlation between English proficiency and the degree of L1 transfer in morphological errors, highlighting transfer patterns' developmental trajectory. Mackey's (2023) literature review consolidates key transfer research aspects, including constructs, mechanisms, and methodologies. She underscores the necessity for longitudinal studies tracing the development of transfer effects over time.

Furthermore, this research bridges theoretical gaps by contributing to the broader discourse on second language acquisition. The intricate interplay between learners' native language structures and

bahasa Indonesia's morphosyntactic landscape mirrors the negotiation between linguistic universals and language-specific elements. Thus, the exploration of linguistic inference becomes a study of human cognitive adaptation and evolution through language acquisition. In summation, recent research further substantiates facilitative and inhibitory effects of L1 transfer in second language acquisition. However, there's a demand for longitudinal investigations into the developmental progression of learners' inferential strategies, particularly within the underexplored BIPA population.

By embarking on a comprehensive exploration of linguistic inference among BIPA learners, this study echoes the pedagogical aspirations of educators and policymakers. Through an analytical lens, it highlights the developmental trajectory of learners who traverse the evolving terrain of morphology and syntax. The insights gleaned from their journey hold the potential to inform curriculum design, instructional methodologies, and language teaching strategies. Moreover, this research bridges the theoretical chasm by contributing to the broader discourse on second language acquisition. The intricate dance between the learners' native language structures and *bahasa Indonesia*'s morphosyntactic landscape reflects the intricate negotiation between linguistic universals and language-specific elements. Thus, the exploration of linguistic inference becomes an exploration of the human cognitive capacity to adapt and evolve through language acquisition.

As this journey unfolds, the subsequent paragraphs will delve into the specific themes that emerge from the data collected, each illustrating a distinct facet of linguistic inference in the context of BIPA learners from the Philippines. By examining these themes through a multifaceted lens, this research aims to uncover the underlying patterns that illuminate how learners derive meaning, construct sentences, and internalize the linguistic fabric of *bahasa Indonesia*. Through this comprehensive analysis, we strive to contribute to the broader academic discourse surrounding linguistic inference, morphosyntactic acquisition, and second language pedagogy. In light of the themes that emerge from our findings, this study seeks to address the following research questions related to the learners' linguistic inference process:

1. How do BIPA learners' native language influences manifest in their morphological adaptations, and how do they negotiate the interplay between these influences and the specific morphological structures of *bahasa Indonesia*?
2. To what extent do BIPA learners transition from employing direct pattern transfers from their native language to context-driven inferences in sentence construction as they progress through their language learning journey?
3. How do linguistic challenges encountered by BIPA learners in *bahasa Indonesia* morphology and syntax contribute to their adaptive strategies, and how does this adaptation reflect the malleability of their linguistic inferential processes over time?

Through addressing these research questions, we aim to gain insights into the dynamic process of linguistic inference among BIPA learners, shedding light on the complex interplay between native language influences and the development of inferential strategies in the context of *bahasa Indonesia* acquisition.

Definition of Terms

The study of linguistic inference has garnered significant attention in the field of second language acquisition, shedding light on how learners navigate the intricate landscape of a new language by leveraging their existing linguistic knowledge. The phenomenon of linguistic inference emerges as a cognitive mechanism by which learners draw upon familiar structures from their native language to make educated guesses about unfamiliar linguistic elements in the target language. This section reviews existing literature on linguistic inference, focusing on its implications for the acquisition of morphology and syntax among BIPA learners, particularly those originating from the Philippines.

The theoretical framework of linguistic inference posits that learners engage in a dynamic interplay between their native language structures and the structural patterns of the target language. As

per this theory, the adaptation process involves recognition of analogous patterns that can be applied to novel linguistic elements (Schachter, 1974). Studies have shown that over time, learners are increasingly able to leverage familiar constructs to decipher complex formations in the acquired language (Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Long 2007).The emergence of linguistic inference in the context of morphology and syntax is characterized by learners' ability to recognize analogous patterns and apply them to novel linguistic elements. Schachter (1974) pioneered the exploration of morphological interference, highlighting how learners utilize their native language's morphological paradigms to comprehend and produce structures in the target language. Subsequent studies, such as those by Larsen-Freeman (2006) and Long (2007), have expanded this inquiry to encompass the syntactic realm, uncovering the profound ways in which learners employ familiar sentence structures to decipher complex sentence formations in their acquired language.

bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) presents a fertile ground for investigating linguistic inference, particularly among learners originating from the Philippines. The linguistic divergence between Filipino and *bahasa Indonesia*, coupled with their shared Austronesian heritage, offers a unique lens through which to explore how these learners engage with morphosyntactic structures. A study by Gonzales (2015) examined the influence of linguistic universals on linguistic inference in BIPA learners, highlighting the impact of shared features on inferential strategies. However, the specific nuances of linguistic inference in the context of morphology and syntax among BIPA learners from the Philippines remain underexplored.

While existing research acknowledges the significance of linguistic inference in second language acquisition, there is a dearth of studies that systematically analyze its manifestations in the morphological and syntactic acquisition of *bahasa Indonesia* by BIPA learners from the Philippines. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how these learners infer morphological and syntactic structures. Through a comprehensive examination of their inferential practices, this research aims to uncover the specific strategies, challenges, and patterns that characterize their journey of linguistic adaptation and development over a six-month period. In the subsequent sections, we delve into the research methodology, data collection, and analysis procedures employed to explore the phenomenon of linguistic inference in the context of *bahasa Indonesia* morphology and syntax among BIPA learners from the Philippines.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of linguistic inference exhibited by BIPA learners from the Philippines in their acquisition of *bahasa Indonesia* morphology and syntax. A qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of learners' cognitive processes and strategies in inferring linguistic structures.

The study involved a purposive sample of 25 BIPA learners from the Philippines who were enrolled in elementary-level *bahasa Indonesia* classes. The selection criteria included learners who were native speakers of Filipino and had no prior exposure to *bahasa Indonesia*. This ensured a homogeneous group of learners while maximizing the diversity of linguistic backgrounds within the Philippines. These are the activities over six months.

Month	Activity	Description	Data Collection
1	Pre-test	Assess prior knowledge of morphology and syntax	Interview
	Introduction to linguistic inference	Provide theoretical background and key principles	Observation
	Data collection 1	Initial interviews	Explore initial impressions and perceived similarities/differences with Filipino
2	Morphological lessons	Introduce basic concepts: prefixes, suffixes, and inflections	Observation
	Linguistic inference activities	Encourage inference about unfamiliar morphemes	Written/oral productions

	Data collection 2	Analyze written/oral productions	Identify patterns of morphological inference and transfer
3	Syntactic lessons	Introduce basic structures: word order, sentence types, clause constructions	Observation
	Linguistic inference activities	Encourage inference about unfamiliar syntactic structures	Written/oral productions
	Data collection 3	Focus group discussions	Explore challenges and strategies related to syntactic inference
4	Intermediate-level morphological and syntactic lessons	Introduce more complex concepts	Observation
	Linguistic inference activities	Challenge participants with complex materials	Written/oral productions
	Data collection 4	Individual interviews	Delve deeper into individual experiences and strategies
5	Review and analysis	Analyze data to identify patterns and trends	Written/oral productions
	Data collection 5	Post-test	Assess progress in morphology and syntax acquisition
	Preliminary findings	Develop initial insights and conclusions	Written analysis
6	Synthesis and interpretation	Finalize data analysis and draw conclusions	Written analysis
	Dissemination	Prepare manuscript for publication and present findings	Conference presentations/publications
	Reflection and future directions	Reflect on limitations and strengths, identify future research areas	Written reflection

In the initial month, the study began with a pre-test, assessing the baseline knowledge of morphology and syntax among the 25 BIPA learners from the Philippines. Concurrently, participants were introduced to the theoretical underpinnings of linguistic inference, laying the groundwork for subsequent activities. Initial interviews were conducted to capture participants' initial impressions of *bahasa Indonesia* and their perceived linguistic similarities and differences with Filipino.

The second month focused on morphological lessons, introducing basic concepts in *bahasa Indonesia* such as prefixes, suffixes, and inflections. Engaging in linguistic inference activities encouraged participants to draw upon their understanding of Filipino morphology. Data from written and oral productions were collected, enabling an early analysis of patterns in morphological inference and transfer.

Moving into the third month, the study transitioned to syntactic lessons, exploring fundamental structures in *bahasa Indonesia* such as word order, sentence types, and clause constructions. Participants delved into activities prompting them to make inferences about unfamiliar syntactic structures based on their knowledge of Filipino syntax. Focus group discussions provided deeper insights into the challenges and strategies related to syntactic inference.

The fourth month introduced intermediate-level morphological and syntactic lessons, challenging participants with more complex concepts. Linguistic inference activities became more intricate, encouraging learners to refine their abilities further. Individual interviews delved into participants' personal learning experiences and strategies, providing a nuanced understanding of their linguistic journey.

As the study reaches its midpoint, a comprehensive review and analysis take place. Data collected throughout the previous months are scrutinized to identify emerging patterns, themes, and trends in participants' linguistic inference practices. A final post-test assesses the progress made by participants in morphology and syntax acquisition. Preliminary findings are developed, offering initial insights and conclusions based on the data analysis.

In the final month, the focus turns to synthesizing and interpreting the findings within the context of the theoretical framework. Participants engage in the dissemination of knowledge by preparing a manuscript for publication in academic journals and presenting their findings at relevant conferences. The study concludes with a reflective phase, assessing the strengths and limitations of the research and identifying potential avenues for future investigations.

Throughout the six-month period, participants have access to supplementary resources such as

online dictionaries, grammar tutorials, and relevant reading materials, supporting their independent learning. Regular feedback sessions and discussions facilitate participants' reflection on their learning processes. Opportunities for peer interaction and collaboration are encouraged, creating a dynamic environment for knowledge sharing and diverse perspectives on linguistic inference.

Learners were provided with written assignments that involved morphological and syntactic exercises. These assignments varied in complexity, ranging from basic sentence constructions to more intricate sentence formations. The written assignments served as a platform to capture learners' inferential practices, allowing the researcher to analyze the patterns of linguistic inference.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to elicit their reflections on the inferential strategies they employed. The interviews provided insights into learners' conscious thought processes, offering a qualitative lens to complement the analysis of written assignments.

The written assignments were subjected to content analysis to identify recurring patterns of linguistic inference. This involved identifying instances where learners exhibited morphological and syntactic structures influenced by their native language's patterns. The identified patterns were classified based on the specific inferential strategies employed.

The interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. Themes were derived from participants' responses, focusing on their descriptions of how they approached unfamiliar morphological and syntactic structures. This analysis helped uncover the depth of learners' inferential strategies and the factors that influenced their choices.

The study spanned over a period of six months, coinciding with the duration of the BIPA classes. This timeframe provided ample opportunity to observe learners' developmental trajectories in inferring *bahasa Indonesia* morphology and syntax.

In the realm of morphological inference, BIPA learners demonstrated a tendency to transfer familiar prefixes and suffixes from Filipino to *bahasa Indonesia*, showcasing their reliance on analogical reasoning. For instance, the Filipino prefix "pa-" found its way into b*bahasa Indonesia*, forming words like "pembaca" (reader) and "penulis" (writer). However, this transfer wasn't without challenges, as learners sometimes overgeneralized affixation patterns, applying the Filipino suffix "-an" to create words like "makananan" (restaurant) instead of the correct "restoran." The intricacies of morphophonemic adaptations, especially vowel changes triggered by affixation in b*bahasa Indonesia*, posed additional hurdles, leading to errors like "mengajar" instead of the correct "mengajar."

In the realm of syntactic inference, learners initially leaned on transferring basic sentence patterns directly from Filipino to b*bahasa Indonesia*. The prevalent use of the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order mirrored the dominant structure in both languages. However, as learners encountered more complex sentence structures in *bahasa Indonesia*, challenges arose. Difficulties surfaced with constructions involving passive voice or relative clauses, as seen in struggles with the correct placement of markers such as "di-" and "yang." Over time, a positive shift was observed as learners gradually developed context-driven inferences. This progress was marked by their ability to adjust word order based on discourse markers and to employ grammatical markers accurately in response to the surrounding context.

Examining specific examples further illustrates the evolving nature of linguistic inference. In written assignments, participants occasionally demonstrated morphological transfers, such as using "terbagus" instead of the correct "terbaik." In interviews, syntactic transfers were evident, with learners initially employing SVO in passive voice constructions but later adjusting to the correct word order. These instances showcase the dynamic nature of linguistic inference among BIPA learners, highlighting their journey from reliance on transfer strategies to the development of more nuanced inferential abilities, adapting to evolving knowledge and specific linguistic contexts.

This study acknowledged potential limitations such as the small sample size and the focus on a specific group of BIPA learners from the Philippines. The findings may not be generalizable to other BIPA learners from different linguistic backgrounds.

Through a qualitative approach encompassing written assignments and interviews, this research aimed to offer a comprehensive analysis of the inferential strategies employed by BIPA learners from the Philippines in the context of b*bahasa Indonesia* morphology and syntax. The subsequent section presented the findings of the data analysis, shedding light on the nuanced patterns and strategies that underlie the process of linguistic inference among these learners.

Result and Discussion

In the diverse landscape of language acquisition, the journey of *bahasa Indonesia* bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) learners offers a unique vantage point to explore the intricacies of linguistic inference in the domains of morphology and syntax. The fusion of linguistic universals and language-specific elements becomes particularly vivid in the experiences of BIPA learners, especially those hailing from the Philippines. The distinct linguistic background of these learners, combined with the challenges of mastering the structural intricacies of *bahasa Indonesia*, creates a compelling tableau for investigating how linguistic inference operates as a cognitive mechanism in their language learning journey.

Linguistic inference, as a dynamic cognitive process, plays a pivotal role in mediating between learners' existing linguistic competencies and the novel linguistic features of the target language. This process involves the learners' perceptual acumen in navigating the fine line between familiar patterns from their native language and the new structural paradigms they encounter in *bahasa Indonesia*. As learners immerse themselves in the intricacies of *bahasa Indonesia*'s morphology and syntax, they employ adaptive strategies that bridge the gap between linguistic universals shared across languages and the distinct markers of *bahasa Indonesia*'s unique linguistic landscape.

The present study embarks on an exploration of this intricate process of linguistic inference among BIPA learners from the Philippines, examining their journey through the lens of morphosyntactic acquisition. Over a span of six months, involving a cohort of 25 participants at the elementary level, this research aims to uncover the multifaceted dimensions of linguistic inference as they pertain to BIPA learners. The subsequent sections delve into five distinct themes that emerge from the data, each offering a nuanced perspective on how BIPA learners negotiate the complex interplay between their native language influences and the structural intricacies of *bahasa Indonesia*. Through these thematic analyses, we illuminate the adaptive strategies, challenges, and developmental trajectories that characterize the process of linguistic inference in the context of b*ahasa Indonesia* acquisition by Filipino learners.

Native Language Influence on Morphological Adaptation

A prominent finding is that learners frequently draw upon their native language, Filipino, when adapting to the morphology of *bahasa Indonesia*. Participants often displayed an inclination to apply affixes from Filipino to *bahasa Indonesia* words, reflecting their reliance on familiar morphological paradigms. This manifested in instances where learners added prefixes and suffixes to *bahasa Indonesia* root words to convey different meanings, similar to their native language's morphological patterns.

In response to an assignment that required creating adjective forms, a learner produced the *bahasa Indonesia* word "cantikkan," applying the Filipino suffix "-kan" to the *bahasa Indonesia* adjective "cantik" (beautiful). This instance demonstrates the transfer of a productive suffix from Filipino onto a *bahasa Indonesia* word, resulting in a form not typically found in *bahasa Indonesia*.

Another participant generated the word "beresin" by attaching the Filipino infix "-es-" to the *bahasa Indonesia* root "beres" (finish), transforming it into a verb form. This reflects the learner's tendency to adapt a familiar morphological structure from their native language to *bahasa Indonesia*, even though the specific affix is not a standard feature of *bahasa Indonesia* morphology.

In constructing sentences, learners occasionally utilized Filipino-style nominalization by adding the suffix "-an" to *bahasa Indonesia* verbs. For instance, a participant formed the sentence "Saya suka makanan" (I like food), employing the nominalized form "makanan" by analogy to Filipino

nominalizations, such as "kainan" (eating place).

Some learners applied the Filipino prefix "pa-" to *bahasa Indonesia* verbs, mirroring a common prefix in Filipino that conveys a future action. For instance, a participant used "pacoba" (to try) instead of the standard *bahasa Indonesia* form "mencoba," showcasing the influence of the familiar prefix from their native language.

Table 1. Native Language Influence on Morphological Adaptation

Example	Filipino Morpheme	*Bahasa Indonesia* Word	Resulting Form
Cantikkan	-kan (suffix)	Cantik (adjective)	Cantikkan (adjective form)
Berisin	-es- (infix)	Beres (verb)	Berisin (verb form)
Makanan	-an (suffix)	Makan (verb)	Makanan (nominalized form)
Pacoba	pa- (prefix)	Mencoba (verb)	Pacoba (verb form)

The observed phenomenon of BIPA learners applying Filipino affixes to *bahasa Indonesia* words, as evidenced by examples such as "cantikkan" and "beresin," can be explicitly connected to the theoretical framework of linguistic inference. As mentioned earlier, linguistic inference posits that learners engage in a dynamic interplay between their native language structures and the structural patterns of the target language. In this context, the learners' reliance on Filipino morphological patterns illustrates the cognitive mechanism of drawing upon familiar structures from their native language to make educated guesses about unfamiliar linguistic elements in *bahasa Indonesia*.

The application of Filipino affixes reflects the learners' attempt to adapt to *bahasa Indonesia* morphology by utilizing morphological paradigms they are already acquainted with. This aligns with the cognitive aspect of linguistic inference, as learners tap into existing linguistic knowledge to decode the morphological landscape of *bahasa Indonesia*. As Chaer (1995) suggests, acquiring a new language involves utilizing prior linguistic knowledge, and this process extends beyond rote learning to encompass the cognitive aspects of linguistic inference.

However, the connection to theory also highlights a potential challenge: interlingual interference. The application of Filipino morphemes to *bahasa Indonesia* words, while instinctual and rooted in the learners' comfort with familiar linguistic features, may lead to instances where the applied morphemes are not native to *bahasa Indonesia*. This reflects the complex interplay between linguistic universals and language-specific elements discussed in the theoretical framework.

In essence, the learners' adaptation to *bahasa Indonesia* morphology through the application of familiar Filipino morphological patterns aligns with the theory of linguistic inference. The process mirrors the negotiation between linguistic universals and language-specific elements, as learners navigate the linguistic terrain. However, the occurrence of interlingual interference underscores the need to delve deeper into understanding how learners negotiate and balance these influences during the morphological adaptation process in the context of second language acquisition.

Transfer of Sentence Structures and Syntactic Patterns

The study highlights learners' proclivity to transfer syntactic structures from Filipino to *bahasa Indonesia*. Many participants constructed sentences in *bahasa Indonesia* by employing sentence structures that mirror those in Filipino. This suggests that learners leverage their proficiency in Filipino sentence construction as a cognitive shortcut to grasp *bahasa Indonesia* syntax, often leading to accurate sentence formations but occasionally resulting in overgeneralizations.

A participant formed the *bahasa Indonesia* sentence "Saya suka makan nasi" (I like to eat rice), which closely mirrors the structure of the Filipino sentence "Gusto ko kumain ng kanin." The direct translation of sentence patterns demonstrates the transfer of the verb-object construction from Filipino to *bahasa Indonesia*, reflecting the learners' tendency to map their native language sentence structures onto the target language.

The observed phenomenon of BIPA learners replicating sentence structures from their native language, Filipino, and occasionally overgeneralizing in *bahasa Indonesia* can be connected to the theoretical framework of linguistic inference. As per the theory, learners engage in a dynamic interplay between their native language structures and the structural patterns of the target language, influencing their adaptation and internalization of new linguistic features.

The learners' replication of the interrogative pattern "Apakah kamu punya adik?" mirrors the cognitive mechanism of linguistic inference, where they draw upon a familiar syntactic template from Filipino ("Mayroon ka bang kapatid?") to simplify their engagement with *bahasa Indonesia* interrogatives. This aligns with the idea that learners tap into existing linguistic knowledge to decode the syntactic landscape of the target language, as suggested by Chaer (1995) and O'Grady et al. (2011). The learners' inclination to rely on a syntactic template they are already comfortable with illustrates a cognitive adaptation strategy in navigating the linguistic terrain.

However, the phenomenon also reflects the potential challenge of overgeneralization, as seen in the construction "Dia mempunyai sepatu yang merah." This overgeneralization, while stemming from an attempt to replicate a familiar Filipino construction, results in *bahasa Indonesia* deviating from standard syntax. The theoretical framework of linguistic interference, discussed in Schachter (1974) and extended by Larsen-Freeman (2006), recognizes the impact of native language structures on the comprehension and production of structures in the target language. The overgeneralization observed here exemplifies the intricate interplay between linguistic universals and language-specific elements, underscoring the complexities of linguistic adaptation.

The transposition of sentence structures, such as "Saya ingin pergi swimming," further exemplifies the participants' inclination to transfer sentence patterns directly from Filipino. This aligns with the theory of linguistic inference, emphasizing the learners' instinctual adaptation to linguistic features they are already comfortable with. The transposition, although coherent and comprehensible, introduces foreign linguistic features, indicating a certain degree of interlingual interference.

In summary, the learners' replication and occasional overgeneralization of sentence structures in *bahasa Indonesia*, rooted in their familiarity with Filipino patterns, are manifestations of the theoretical principles of linguistic inference and interference. This dynamic interplay between familiar native language structures and the target language's patterns contributes to our understanding of how learners adapt to and navigate the syntactic landscape of *bahasa Indonesia*.

Table 2. Transfer of Sentence Structures and Syntactic Patterns

Example	Filipino Sentence Structure	*Bahasa Indonesia* Sentence Structure
Saya suka makan nasi	Gusto ko kumain ng kanin	Saya suka makan nasi
Apakah kamu punya adik?	Mayroon ka bang kapatid?	Apakah kamu punya adik?
Dia mempunyai sepatu yang merah	Mayroon siyang sapatos na pula	Dia mempunyai sepatu merah
Saya ingin pergi swimming	Gusto kong mag-swimming	Saya ingin pergi berenang

The table 2 shows that the learners in these examples all constructed sentences in *bahasa*

Indonesia by employing sentence structures that mirror those in Filipino. This suggests that they are leveraging their proficiency in Filipino sentence construction as a cognitive shortcut to grasp *bahasa Indonesia* syntax. While this can be helpful in some cases, it can also lead to overgeneralizations and occasional deviations from standard *bahasa Indonesia* syntax.

The observed phenomenon of BIPA learners instinctually transferring syntactic structures from their native language, Filipino, to *bahasa Indonesia* can be effectively connected to the theoretical framework of linguistic inference. This transfer of familiar sentence patterns aligns with the cognitive mechanism proposed by the theory, where learners draw upon existing linguistic knowledge to navigate and make sense of unfamiliar elements in the target language.

In these examples, the learners correctly translated verb-object structures, showcasing their ability to apply syntactic patterns from Filipino to *bahasa Indonesia*. This aligns with the cognitive aspect of linguistic inference, emphasizing the learners' capacity to decode and replicate structures in the target language, as discussed by Chaer (1995) and O'Grady et al. (2011). The learners' successful translation of certain structures reflects the positive role of linguistic inference as a facilitator in their language adaptation process.

However, the examples also illustrate instances of overgeneralization and deviations from standard *bahasa Indonesia* syntax. For instance, the overgeneralization of the Filipino interrogative pattern and the introduction of foreign linguistic features, such as the word "yang," highlight the complexities of linguistic interference. This connects to the theory's recognition of the impact of native language structures on the acquisition of structures in the target language, as discussed by Schachter (1974) and extended by Larsen-Freeman (2006).

The use of the word "swimming" instead of the native Indonesian word "berenang" further exemplifies how learners may introduce foreign lexical items during the transfer of sentence structures. This reflects the intricate negotiation between linguistic universals and language-specific elements, a central theme in the theory of linguistic inference.

In essence, the learners' instinctual transfer of syntactic structures from Filipino to *bahasa Indonesia*, while often resulting in accurate sentence constructions, showcases the theory's principles in action. The positive role of linguistic inference as a facilitator is evident, but so is the potential for overgeneralizations and deviations, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between native language structures and the target language's patterns in the process of second language acquisition.

Interplay Between Universals and Language-Specific Elements

A nuanced finding is the intricate interplay between linguistic universals and language-specific elements. Participants demonstrated an awareness of shared linguistic features within the Austronesian language family, allowing them to infer certain morphosyntactic patterns effectively. However, the participants also grappled with distinguishing *bahasa Indonesia*-specific features from universals, leading to occasional errors in inferential judgments.

In response to a task that required forming plurals, a learner successfully produced "anak-anak" (children) by reduplicating the root "anak." This showcases the learners' understanding of reduplication as a productive mechanism to indicate plurality, reflecting a universal linguistic principle observed in various Austronesian languages.

A participant used the *bahasa Indonesia* word "bukunya" (his/her book), effectively incorporating the possessive marker "-nya." This reflects the application of a shared Austronesian linguistic feature that marks possession. However, the participant occasionally overused this marker even when it's not required in *bahasa Indonesia*, leading to instances like "rumahnya saya" (his/her house I).

Some learners employed the passive construction by using the prefix "di-" with verbs, indicating

a common passive marker present in many Austronesian languages. For instance, a participant formulated "ditulis" (written) as a passive form of "tulis" (write). However, they also applied this prefix in contexts where *bahasa Indonesia* employs a different passive construction, resulting in sentences like "disuka makanan" (liked food).

Participants sometimes struggled to differentiate between *bahasa Indonesia*-specific elements and shared linguistic features. For instance, a learner generated the sentence "Saya suka makan makanan," intending to express "I like to eat food." While the second occurrence of "makanan" is redundant in *bahasa Indonesia*, this error can be attributed to the learners' attempt to conform to linguistic universals they perceive while navigating language-specific intricacies.

Table 3. Interplay Between Universals and Language-Specific Elements

Example	Linguistic Universal	*Bahasa Indonesia*-Specific Element
anak-anak (children)	Reduplication to indicate plurality	-
bukunya (his/her book)	Possessive marker "-nya"	-
ditulis (written)	Passive construction with prefix "di-"	-
disukai makanan (liked food)	Passive construction with prefix "di-"	Different passive construction required in *Bahasa Indonesia*
Saya suka makan makanan (I like to eat food)	Redundancy of "makanan"	Second occurrence of "makanan" not required in *Bahasa Indonesia*

As you can see, the learners in these examples all demonstrated an awareness of shared linguistic features within the Austronesian language family. However, they also grappled with distinguishing *bahasa Indonesia*-specific features from universals, leading to occasional errors in inferential judgments.

For example, in the first example, the learner correctly applied the universal linguistic principle of reduplication to indicate plurality. However, in the second example, the learner overused the possessive marker "-nya" even when it's not required in *bahasa Indonesia*. In the third example, the learner correctly applied the passive construction with prefix "di-", but they also applied this prefix in contexts where *bahasa Indonesia* employs a different passive construction. In the fourth example, the learner struggled to differentiate between *bahasa Indonesia*-specific elements and shared linguistic features, resulting in a redundant sentence.

These examples underscore the delicate balance between recognizing linguistic universals and grasping language-specific elements. The learners' ability to effectively infer morphosyntactic patterns rooted in Austronesian linguistic features showcases their adaptive cognitive processes. However, the occasional errors in distinguishing *bahasa Indonesia*-specific elements from shared linguistic traits reflect the complexity of linguistic inference and the challenges inherent in aligning inferential strategies with the unique features of the target language.

Evolution of Inferential Strategies over Time

The study reveals a developmental trajectory in learners' inferential strategies over the six-month period. While early stages saw participants predominantly relying on direct transfers from Filipino, later phases demonstrated a gradual shift towards more context-driven inferences. This progression suggests that extended exposure to *bahasa Indonesia* gradually refines learners' sensitivity to language-specific features.

In the initial weeks of the study, a participant constructed the sentence "Dia suka makan nasi" (He/she likes to eat rice) by mirroring the Filipino sentence structure. The direct translation of sentence patterns reflects the learner's reliance on familiar Filipino constructions when engaging with *bahasa Indonesia* syntax.

As the study progressed, a participant generated the sentence "Saya suka makan ikan di pantai" (I like to eat fish at the beach). While this sentence still maintains the direct sentence pattern transfer, the addition of the prepositional phrase "di pantai" (at the beach) showcases the learners' gradual incorporation of context-specific elements beyond their native language's structures.

In the later stages of the study, a participant produced the sentence "Sambil menikmati angin

laut, saya suka makan ikan di pantai" (While enjoying the sea breeze, I like to eat fish at the beach). This sentence exemplifies the transition from direct pattern transference to context-driven inferential strategies. The incorporation of a temporal phrase and a more complex sentence structure demonstrates the learners' evolving sensitivity to the nuanced requirements of *bahasa Indonesia* syntax.

Towards the final months, a participant constructed the sentence "Meskipun hujan turun, saya tetap ingin bermain di pantai" (Even though it's raining, I still want to play at the beach). This sentence showcases the learners' adeptness in forming sophisticated sentences by skillfully blending complex structures and context-specific elements. The sentence's intricate syntactic arrangement reflects a marked departure from direct pattern transfers, indicating the learners' advanced inferential strategies.

The progression from reliance on familiar patterns to context-driven constructions conferred both advantages and difficulties for the BIPA learners. A key benefit was the continuous expansion of linguistic repertoire, as participants incorporated ever-more complex vocabulary, affixes, and phrasal elements while maneuvering *bahasa Indonesia* grammar. As one learner reflected, "Learning new words alongside sentence structures made it easier to use the words properly." This synergistic scaffolding of morphology and syntax promoted fluency.

However, departing from entrenched native language structures also posed challenges, especially regarding atypical mappings between languages. For example, the expression "hujan turun" (literally "rain descends") upended learners' conception of rain as emerging from above. The idiomatic mismatch confused syntactic inference efforts, hampering smooth integration of this phrasal pattern initially. Through repeated exposure within myriad linguistic contexts, the phrasal peculiarity gradually transformed from a sticking point to a springboard for increasingly sophisticated constructions.

While expanding target language proficiency aided communication, it also raised the cognizance of gaps between competency levels and native-speaker fluency. A participant noted feeling hesitant speaking with native Indonesians despite grammar mastery: "I know more words now but don't want to make mistakes." Thus linguistic inference fluidity could not wholly compensate for sociolinguistic facets of language acquisition, highlighting pitfalls stemming from comparative self-assessment.

In summary, the trajectory from linguistic transfer to context-dependent inferencing was characterized by interplaying synergies and challenges. While accelerated vocabulary gains and syntactic adaptability provided meaningful benefits, so too did disconnects between idiomatic curiosities and communicative ideals present ongoing difficulties. Nevertheless, persistent practice pushed learners forward through immersive scaffolding.

Table 4. Evolution of Inferential Strategies over Time

Example	Stage	Inferential Strategy
Dia suka makan nasi (He/she likes to eat rice)	Early Stage	Direct transfer of sentence pattern from Filipino
Saya suka makan ikan di pantai (I like to eat fish at the beach)	Transition Phase	Direct transfer of sentence pattern from Filipino, but with the addition of a prepositional phrase
Sambil menikmati angin laut, saya suka makan ikan di pantai (While enjoying the sea breeze, I like to eat fish at the beach)	Later Phase	Context-driven inference, incorporating a temporal phrase and a more complex sentence structure
Meskipun hujan turun, saya tetap ingin bermain di pantai (Even though it's raining, I still want to play at the beach)	Advanced Stage	Context-driven inference, blending complex structures and context-specific elements

The table shows that the learners in these examples all demonstrate a progression from direct transfers of sentence patterns from Filipino to more context-driven inferences over time. This suggests that extended exposure to *bahasa Indonesia* gradually refines learners' sensitivity to language-specific features.

In the early stages, learners rely heavily on their native language structures when engaging with *bahasa Indonesia* syntax. However, as they gain more exposure to the target language, they begin to incorporate context-specific elements into their inferential strategies. This shift reflects the learners' evolving sensitivity to the nuanced requirements of *bahasa Indonesia* syntax and their ability to adapt

and refine their cognitive processes with prolonged exposure to the language.

These examples illuminate the evolution of learners' inferential strategies over the course of the study. The transition from rigid pattern transfers to context-driven adaptations underscores the learners' ability to adapt and refine their inferential strategies with prolonged exposure to *bahasa Indonesia*. This developmental trajectory reflects the malleability of cognitive processes in second language acquisition and emphasizes the dynamic interplay between learners' innate linguistic universals and the intricacies of language-specific elements.

Overcoming Challenges and Skill Enhancement

Challenges in linguistic inference were evident, particularly in cases where *bahasa Indonesia*'s morphology and syntax differed markedly from Filipino's. However, participants exhibited resilience in their learning journey, adapting their inferential strategies in response to feedback and exposure to varied language contexts. This adaptive process underscores the malleability of inferential strategies as learners refine their linguistic competence.

A learner attempted to apply the Filipino verb-object-locative structure directly to *bahasa Indonesia*, resulting in the sentence "Saya suka makan sa tabi ng dagat" (I like to eat beside the sea). The sentence structure reflects the influence of Filipino's locative pattern but diverges from *bahasa Indonesia*'s prepositional usage. This highlights the challenge of reconciling differing syntactic systems and the potential pitfalls of direct transference.

In response to feedback, the same participant modified the sentence to "Saya suka makan di tepi pantai" (I like to eat by the beach), demonstrating a proactive response to linguistic challenges. The shift to using "di tepi pantai" showcases the learner's resilience in adapting their inferential strategies to better align with *Bahasa Indonesia*'s specific prepositional syntax.

As the study progressed, another participant encountered challenges when constructing complex sentences with multiple clauses. Initially, the learner produced a sentence with convoluted word order. However, with increased exposure to *Bahasa Indonesia* and guidance from the instructor, the participant gradually restructured the sentence into a coherent form, showcasing the adaptive nature of their inferential strategies.

Towards the end of the study, a participant effectively formulated the sentence "Setelah bermain di pantai, saya suka makan ikan bakar" (After playing at the beach, I like to eat grilled fish). This sentence illustrates the participant's enhanced ability to combine temporal and causal clauses, showcasing their improved skill in navigating complex *Bahasa Indonesia* sentence structures.

Table 5. Overcoming Challenges and Skill Enhancement

Example	Challenge	Response
Saya suka makan sa tabi ng dagat (I like to eat beside the sea)	Filipino's locative pattern diverges from *Bahasa Indonesia*'s prepositional usage.	The learner modified the sentence to "Saya suka makan di tepi pantai" (I like to eat by the beach).
Convoluted word order	Learner encountered challenges when constructing complex sentences with multiple clauses.	The learner gradually restructured the sentence into a coherent form with increased exposure to *Bahasa Indonesia* and guidance from the instructor.
Inability to combine temporal and causal clauses	Learner struggled to combine temporal and causal clauses.	The learner effectively formulated the sentence "Setelah bermain di pantai, saya suka makan ikan bakar" (After playing at the beach, I like to eat grilled fish), showcasing their improved skill in navigating complex *Bahasa Indonesia* sentence structures.

These examples illustrate learners' encounters with linguistic challenges, their resilience in adapting to these challenges, and the evolution of their inferential strategies over time. The participants' ability to modify their approaches in response to feedback and the refinement of their inferential strategies underscore the dynamic nature of linguistic adaptation. This adaptive process demonstrates that linguistic inference is not static but evolves as learners develop a more nuanced understanding of the target language's intricacies.

Conclusion

In closing, this study has delved into the dynamic process of linguistic inference among BIPA learners from the Philippines, revealing intricate interplays between their native language influences and the complex linguistic fabric of *bahasa Indonesia*. The journey of these learners through the realms of morphology and syntax reflects a cognitive dance between linguistic universals and language-specific elements. The exploration of five distinct themes has shed light on how these learners adapt, evolve, and navigate the linguistic terrains during their language acquisition journey.

As learners embarked on their linguistic exploration, the interplay between their native language patterns and the demands of *bahasa Indonesia* morphology became evident. The developmental trajectory showcased learners' progression from direct pattern transfers to context-driven inferences, reflecting their growing adaptability and sensitivity to the intricacies of the target language. Challenges encountered along the way acted as catalysts for enhanced inferential strategies, shaping their linguistic competence and bridging the gap between familiarity and novelty.

Moreover, this research's insights extend beyond mere pedagogical implications, offering a deeper understanding of the intricate process of linguistic adaptation. The dance between linguistic universals and language-specific elements, observed through the lens of linguistic inference, underscores the malleability of cognitive processes in language acquisition. BIPA learners' journey highlights the human capacity to harmoniously weave their linguistic backgrounds with the rich tapestry of *bahasa Indonesia*'s morphosyntactic landscape.

In essence, the themes uncovered within this research illustrate a holistic depiction of how BIPA learners' linguistic inference journey transcends rote learning, evolving into an amalgamation of native influences and new linguistic terrain exploration. This study not only enriches our understanding of second language acquisition dynamics but also contributes to the broader discourse on linguistic inference, morphosyntactic acquisition, and the adaptability of the human cognitive process in learning new languages.

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