Linguistic Error Patterns And Barriers To Arabic Language Acquisition Among Islamic University Students In Indonesia

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Abstract

The acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language in higher education presents complex challenges involving structural linguistic and psycholinguistic factors. Arabic differs typologically from Indonesian in phonology, morphology, and syntax, which often leads to first language interference and the development of unique interlanguage systems among learners. This study aims to analyze the patterns and distribution of linguistic errors among university students, identify interlanguage phenomena in both written and oral production, and examine the influence of psycholinguistic factors, particularly foreign language anxiety, on learners' linguistic performance. This research employed a mixed-methods descriptive-analytical design. Data were collected through language production tests, analysis of students' written texts, foreign language anxiety questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. Linguistic error analysis was conducted by classifying phonological, morphosemantic, and syntactic errors, while correlational statistical analysis was used to examine the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the frequency of linguistic errors. Instrument validity and reliability were ensured through expert judgment and internal consistency analysis. The findings indicate that phonological and syntactic errors were the most dominant categories, largely influenced by first language interference. The complexity of the Arabic morphological system, particularly root-and-pattern derivation and inflection, also contributed significantly to persistent errors in written production. Interlanguage analysis revealed that learners developed systematic but non-target-like linguistic systems, reflecting transitional competence in Arabic. Moreover, correlational results demonstrate a significant positive relationship between foreign language anxiety and the frequency of linguistic errors, suggesting that affective factors function as a barrier to effective language acquisition. This study contributes to the field of Arabic second language acquisition by integrating structural linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives within an interlanguage framework. Practically, the findings provide an empirical basis for evidence-based pedagogical strategies, including explicit phonetic training, morphological awareness enhancement, contrastive syntactic instruction, and affective interventions to reduce foreign language anxiety. These results offer valuable implications for curriculum development and instructional practices in Arabic language education in higher education contexts.

Keywords: Linguistic Error Analysis; Arabic Language Acquisition; Islamic University Students

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic is a world language that holds a strategic position in the academic, religious, social, and political spheres globally. As one of the official languages of the United Nations, Arabic is widely used in international diplomacy, scientific literature, and cross-cultural communication in the Middle East and North Africa (Hanani, 2025). In the Islamic scientific tradition, Arabic serves as the primary medium for the transmission of classical knowledge, including tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and philosophy (Alkhindi & Yusuf, 2025). Therefore, mastery of Arabic is not only seen as a linguistic skill, but also as an epistemological prerequisite for understanding primary scientific sources. In the era of globalization of higher education, Arabic is also increasingly being studied as a foreign language by non-Arabic speakers in various countries, including in Southeast Asia (Shlowiy, 2022).

In Indonesia, Arabic holds a unique position because it is integrated into both formal and informal religious education systems, particularly in Islamic higher education. Arabic is taught as a core subject in madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and state and private Islamic universities (Hermawan & Kuswoyo, 2025). Despite the relatively high learning intensity, students' functional proficiency levels in Arabic still show significant variation (Munawarah & Ilmiani, 2024). Many students experience difficulties in understanding academic texts, communicating verbally, and producing scientific writing in Arabic. This phenomenon raises fundamental questions about the effectiveness of Arabic language pedagogy and the linguistic and non-linguistic factors that influence language acquisition.

The typological differences between Indonesian as the students' mother tongue and Arabic as the target language are one of the main factors influencing the language acquisition process. Indonesian belongs to the Austronesian family with a relatively simple morphological system and an analytic syntactic structure, while Arabic belongs to the Semitic family with a non-linear morphological system based on roots and word patterns (Baihaqi dkk., 2025). This typological contrast creates complex cognitive challenges for learners of Arabic as a foreign language (Fadhilah, 2026). In contrastive linguistic studies, structural differences between languages are often a source of negative transfer that results in systematic errors in second language production (Vaca Grimaldi, 2025).Therefore, linguistic error analysis is a relevant approach to identifying patterns of difficulties experienced by Arabic language learners in Indonesia.

Second language acquisition within the concept of interlanguage occupies a central position in explaining the transitional language system developed by learners. Interlanguage theory states that second language learners construct an internal linguistic system that is dynamic, systematic, and evolving in response to linguistic input and learning experiences. This system does not completely resemble either the mother tongue or the target language, but has unique characteristics that reflect the learner's cognitive processes. Linguistic errors in this context are viewed as indicators of language development, not merely normative deviations (González & Martínez, 2020). Linguistic error analysis can provide empirical insights into the stages of interlanguage development and the cognitive strategies used by learners.

Previous research in the field of Arabic as a foreign language acquisition has identified various categories of linguistic errors, including phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic errors. Research by (Alshehri, 2021) Studies have shown that non-Arabic learners tend to experience difficulties in pronouncing pharyngeal sounds, verb inflection systems, and sentence

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structures that differ from their native language. However, most of these studies were conducted on Arabic learners in non-Austronesian countries, such as Europe, Turkey, and West Asia. Research on Indonesian-speaking Arabic learners is still relatively limited and often descriptive in nature without in-depth analysis of cognitive and environmental factors. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct a comprehensive empirical study of Indonesian students' linguistic error patterns in learning Arabic.

Psycholinguistic variables and the learning environment also play a significant role in the Arabic language acquisition process. Factors such as language anxiety, learning motivation, attitudes toward the target language, and exposure to authentic linguistic input can influence learners' success rates. Within the framework of affective filter theory, affective variables can hinder or facilitate the language acquisition process by influencing the processing of linguistic input. Students experiencing high levels of anxiety tend to avoid complex language production and limit the use of complex grammatical structures (Jawed dkk., 2025). Therefore, linguistic error analysis needs to be combined with psycholinguistic factor studies to obtain a holistic picture of the obstacles to Arabic language learning.

Traditional learning approaches often emphasize prescriptive grammar and vocabulary memorization, with little attention to communicative language use. This can lead to a gap between students' grammatical and communicative competencies. Communicative and task-based approaches have been recommended in second language acquisition literature, but their implementation in Arabic language learning in Indonesia remains uneven (Baihaqi dkk., 2025). Therefore, understanding students' linguistic error patterns can provide an empirical basis for designing more effective pedagogical interventions. Error analysis can also be used as a diagnostic tool to identify students' specific learning needs.

The applied linguistics perspective states that error analysis aims not only to identify errors but also to explain the cognitive mechanisms underlying them. Phonological errors, for example, can be related to the learner's perception of sounds and phonetic representations in memory, while morphological errors can reflect strategies for generalizing grammatical rules (Ismail, 2025). Identifying dominant error patterns can help lecturers and curriculum designers prioritize materials and determine teaching strategies. For example, the dominance of phonological errors may indicate the need for intensive phonetics training, while the dominance of morphological errors in writing may indicate the need for a systematic morphosemantic approach. Furthermore, an understanding of psycholinguistic factors can be used to design a more supportive learning environment and reduce student anxiety. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of Arabic language learning in Indonesia.

Based on this background, there is a significant research gap related to a comprehensive analysis of Indonesian students' linguistic error patterns in Arabic language learning that integrates linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions. Most previous studies have not combined error analysis across the four language skills simultaneously and have not empirically considered affective factors. Therefore, this study aims to identify and classify students' linguistic error patterns in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as to analyze factors that hinder the process of Arabic language acquisition. This study also seeks to answer questions regarding the most dominant types of linguistic errors, the mother tongue transfer mechanisms involved, and the influence of psycholinguistic factors on students' language production.

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METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design with an error analysis approach combined with questionnaire-based psycholinguistic data. A cross-sectional, multi-site design was chosen to identify students' linguistic error patterns in the four Arabic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as the affective factors that influence language acquisition. This approach allows for systematic error mapping and empirical analysis of the relationships between linguistic and non-linguistic variables. The study involved 105 third-year students from three state Islamic universities in Indonesia: UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, and UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the criteria of active students, speakers of Indonesian or Austronesian regional languages, and no experience of living in an Arab country for a long time. The participants' proficiency level was at the intermediate level (equivalent to CEFR B1–B2).

Table 1. Research subjects

University	Students	Gender Distribution	Average IPK Language
UIN Kediri	40	45% L, 55% P	3.45
UIN Yogyakarta	35	50% L, 50% P	3.30
UIN Surabaya	30	60% L, 40% P	3.15
Total	**105**	—	—

Linguistic data were collected through performative tests of four language skills: audio transcription, visual description and interview, reading aloud of academic texts, and essay writing. Psycholinguistic factors were measured using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Data collection was conducted over one academic semester in regular classes. Oral production was digitally recorded, while written assignments were collected in electronic form. The questionnaire was distributed both online and offline to ensure maximum response rate. All data were anonymized using participant codes. Error analysis followed the stages of error identification, classification, description, and evaluation. Errors were categorized into four main types: phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and inferential statistics (ANOVA and Pearson correlation) with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. The validity of the instrument was tested through expert validation and a pilot test. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.78–0.91$), while the reliability of error coding was tested using Cohen's kappa to ensure inter-rater agreement. Data triangulation was performed by combining linguistic tests and perceptual questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency Distribution of Linguistic Errors

The results of the linguistic error analysis indicate that students learning Arabic as a foreign language experience various errors in the four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Errors are classified into four linguistic categories: phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic, to provide a comprehensive picture of the learners' difficulty profile. The error frequency distribution indicates that phonological and morphological errors are the most dominant categories, while lexical and syntactic errors appear with lower intensity but remain significant in students' language production. These findings indicate that typological differences

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between Indonesian and Arabic contribute significantly to the error patterns that emerge during the language acquisition process.

Data on the distribution of error frequencies indicate that reading (qira'ah) has the highest percentage of phonological errors compared to other skills, indicating students' difficulties in producing and recognizing Arabic sounds accurately. In listening (istima'), phonological errors also show a high percentage, indicating difficulties in perceiving sounds that are not found in the Indonesian phonological system. Speaking (kalam) shows a predominance of lexical errors, indicating limited vocabulary and lexical substitution strategies in oral communication. Meanwhile, writing (kitabah) shows a predominance of morphological errors, reflecting the complexity of the Arabic inflectional and derivational systems, which are fundamentally different from those of Indonesian.

Quantitatively, the distribution of errors shows significant variation across language skills. Phonological errors reached the highest percentage in reading and listening, while morphological errors were most prevalent in writing. Lexical errors appeared significantly in speaking, indicating that learners tend to rely on a limited vocabulary in spoken language production. Syntactic errors were relatively lower compared to other categories, but still showed a pattern of mother tongue interference in Arabic sentence structure. This distribution pattern indicates that each language skill has a distinct error profile and requires a specific pedagogical approach.

This finding is in line with second language acquisition theory which states that linguistic complexity and typological distance between languages influence the level of difficulty for learners (Bulté dkk., 2025). Dominant phonological errors can be explained through the theory of cross-linguistic sound perception, in which learners tend to map the sounds of the target language into the phonological categories of their native language. Morphological errors reflect the strategy of overgeneralizing grammatical rules, which is a common characteristic in interlingual development. Meanwhile, lexical and syntactic errors reflect the limitations of linguistic input and the transfer of native language structures into the target language (Wrembel dkk., 2020).

This analysis of linguistic error distribution provides an empirical basis for understanding the dynamics of Arabic language acquisition among Indonesian university students. By identifying the dominant error categories for each language skill, this study provides a foundation for designing targeted pedagogical interventions. Furthermore, this error distribution pattern suggests that Arabic language learning in higher education requires a holistic approach that integrates phonetic training, morphological reinforcement, vocabulary enrichment, and syntactic competence development. These findings also demonstrate that linguistic error analysis is an effective diagnostic tool for evaluating the effectiveness of Arabic language learning in academic settings.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Linguistic Error Types Across Arabic Language Skills

Language Skills	Phonological	Lexical	Morphological	Syntax
Listening (Istima')	45%	20%	15%	20%
Speaking (Kalam)	30%	40%	10%	20%
Reading (Qira'ah)	55%	25%	15%	5%
Writing (Kitabah)	20%	25%	35%	20%

The distribution of error percentages in the table shows that students' linguistic error patterns are not homogeneous, but rather specific to the type of language skill and the level of complexity of the linguistic structures produced. The dominance of phonological errors in reading and listening skills indicates that the perception and production of Arabic sounds remains a major challenge for

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Indonesian language learners. This can be explained through the theory of cross-linguistic phonological transfer, in which learners tend to map the sounds of the target language into the phonological categories of their mother tongue, resulting in substitution or omission of sounds that are not found in the Indonesian phonological system (Kopečková dkk., 2023).This pattern indicates that phonetic difficulties are not only articulatory, but also perceptual and cognitive.

The relatively high rate of lexical errors in speaking skills indicates that limited productive vocabulary is a major factor in oral communication. Students tend to use compensatory strategies such as repeating the same vocabulary, using common words, or code-switching to Indonesian to maintain fluency. This finding aligns with the lexical retrieval model of second language acquisition, which states that limited lexical access in long-term memory can hinder spontaneous language production (Li & Jeong, 2020). Thus, lexical errors in speaking skills reflect not only a lack of input, but also limited automation.

The predominance of morphological errors in writing skills indicates that students experience difficulties in mastering the non-linear Arabic morphological system, particularly in the use of verb derivation and inflection patterns, as well as gender and number marking. These errors indicate a strategy of overgeneralization of grammatical rules, where learners apply morphological rules excessively or inappropriately to specific situations. This finding reinforces the assumption that Arabic morphology is one of the most complex aspects for non-native learners, especially for learners who come from language backgrounds with relatively simple morphology, such as Indonesian. Although the percentage of syntactic errors is relatively lower compared to other categories, the error patterns that emerge indicate the interference of native language structures in Arabic sentence formation. Students tend to retain Indonesian word order and predication patterns in Arabic sentences, resulting in syntactic constructions that do not conform to the norms of the target language. This phenomenon indicates that syntactic transfer is persistent in learners' interlanguage, especially at the intermediate proficiency stage. Therefore, despite their lower frequency, syntactic errors still have significant implications for the accuracy and acceptability of students' academic communication.

Analysis of Phonological Errors and Mother Tongue Interference

Phonological error analysis indicates that students experience significant difficulties in the perception and production of Arabic sounds that are not present in the Indonesian phonological inventory. Phonological errors occur in the form of substitutions, deletions, and sound distortions, reflecting the process of mapping the sounds of the target language into the phonetic categories of the mother tongue. This phenomenon indicates that learners' phonological representations are still dominated by the Indonesian phonological system, which is relatively poor in pharyngeal, uvular, and emphatic consonants typical of Arabic (Brosseau-Lapré & Schumaker, 2020). Therefore, phonological errors can be viewed as an indicator of the phonetic typological distance between the mother tongue and the target language. Phonological errors are the most dominant error category in reading and listening skills, with percentages reaching 55% and 45%, respectively. The high number of errors in these two receptive skills indicates that phonological problems are not only articulatory, but also perceptual. Students show difficulty in distinguishing pairs of sounds that have adjacent but non-contrasting places of articulation in Indonesian. This perceptual difficulty has a direct impact on inaccurate sound production in speaking and reading aloud skills.

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Table 3. Phonological Error Patterns in Students' Production of Arabic Phonemes

Target Sound (Arabic)	Student Production	Science Target	Production Science	Type of Error
ح (ḥāʾ)	ه (hāʾ)	/ħ/	/h/	Substitution
خ (khāʾ)	ك (kāf)	/x/	/k/	Substitution
ع (ʿayn)	Ø	/ʕ/	Ø	Deletion
ق (qāf)	ك (kāf)	/q/	/k/	Substitution
ص (ṣād)	س (sīn)	/sˤ/	/s/	De-emphasis
ض (ḍād)	د (dāl)	/dˤ/	/d/	De-emphasis

The results in the table show that students' phonological errors primarily involve substitution of non-native sounds with the closest native sounds articulatory. Pharyngeal sounds /ħ/ and /ʕ/ as well as uvular sounds /x/ and /q/ do not have direct equivalents in Indonesian, so learners replace them with the closest glottal or velar sounds perceptually. This phenomenon is consistent with the Perceptual Assimilation Model theory, which states that second language learners assimilate new sounds into the phonological categories of their native language (Chen dkk., 2020). The omission of /ʕ/ indicates that the sound is not only difficult to produce, but also difficult to represent in the learner's phonological system. Errors in emphatic consonants (ṣ, ḍ) indicate the phenomenon of de-emphasis, namely the learner's failure to produce the secondary phonological feature of pharyngealization. Indonesian does not recognize the emphatic–non-emphatic contrast, so learners do not have a phonological category to represent this feature. As a result, learners produce emphatic consonants as ordinary alveolar consonants, which causes changes in lexical meaning in some cases. These findings indicate that suprasegmental and secondary phonological features of Arabic are areas of significant difficulty for Austronesian learners.

The phonological errors that occur reflect negative transfer from the Indonesian phonological system, which has a more limited consonant inventory and does not recognize pharyngeal or uvular contrasts. The CV-dominant syllabic structure of Indonesian also causes students to tend to add epenthetic vowels to Arabic consonant clusters, especially in complex onset and coda positions. This epenthesis phenomenon is found in the reading of academic texts, where learners insert vowels to facilitate articulation. This indicates that phonological errors occur not only at the segment level, but also at the syllabic level. This phonological analysis shows that students' errors are not random, but systematic and predictable based on language typological differences. Phonological errors represent the early to intermediate stages of interlanguage development, where learners still rely on the phonological categories of their native language. With increasing phonetic input and training, a restructuring of phonological representations in the learner's interlanguage system is expected. Therefore, phonological errors can be viewed as an indicator of Arabic learners' phonological development.

These findings have theoretical implications for the study of second language phonological acquisition. The predominance of substitution and omission errors indicates that learners experience difficulties in forming new phonological categories that are not available in their native language. This supports the view that second language phonological acquisition is influenced by both perceptual and articulatory factors simultaneously. Furthermore, these results strengthen the argument that the phonetic typological distance between Austronesian and Semitic languages is a strong predictor of learners' phonological difficulty levels.

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Morphosemantic Complexity in Written Language Production

Analysis of errors in writing skills shows that morphological errors are the most dominant category, with a percentage reaching 35%. This finding indicates that the root-and-pattern morphology of Arabic is a major source of difficulty for Indonesian language learners. In contrast to Indonesian, which is analytic with minimal inflectional morphology, Arabic has a non-linear morphological system involving internal vowel changes, affixation, and complex grammatical marking. This typological difference creates a significant cognitive load in the written language encoding process. Students' morphological errors can be classified into several main subcategories, namely verb inflection errors, gender and number marking errors, nominal derivation errors, and morphosyntactic agreement errors. These errors indicate that learners have not fully mastered the mapping between morphological form and semantic function in Arabic. In other words, morphological errors reflect a failure to simultaneously integrate grammatical and semantic information in written language production.

Table 4. Morphological Error Patterns in Students' Arabic Language Production

Target Form	Student Production	Morphological Analysis	Type of Error
اِسْتِخْدَامُ التِّقْنِيَّةِ الْحَدِيثَةِ	اِسْتَخْدَامُ التِّقْنِيَّةِ الْحَدِيثَةِ	Misanalysis of derived verb patterns (Form X vs Form I)	Pattern simplification
الْمُسْتَكْشِفُونَ الْعِلْمِيُّونَ	الْمُسْتَكْشِفُ الْعِلْمِيُّونَ	Plural inflection omission in active participle	Number agreement omission
مَشْرُوعَاتٌ تَعْلِيمِيَّةٌ مُتَطَوِّرَةٌ	مَشْرُوعَاتٌ تَعْلِيمِيَّةٌ مُتَطَوِّر	Feminine adjective agreement failure	Gender agreement error
الْمُسْتَشَارَاتُ الْأَكَادِيمِيَّةُ	الْمُسْتَشَارَةُ الْأَكَادِيمِيَّةُ	Broken plural vs sound plural confusion	Plural derivation confusion
يَسْتَطِيعُ الطُّلَّابُ أَنْ يُطَوِّرُوا مَهَارَاتِهِمْ	يَسْتَطِيعُ الطُّلَّابُ أَنْ يُطَوِّرُ مَهَارَاتِهِمْ	Subjunctive verb agreement error after أن	Mood and agreement error
الْمُتَعَلِّقَاتُ النَّظَرِيَّةُ	الْمُتَعَلِّقُونَ النَّظَرِيَّةُ	Derivational category confusion (nominal vs verbal participle)	Category misassignment

Analysis of the table shows that students' morphological errors are systematic and follow a specific pattern. Mismarking of gender and number indicates that learners have difficulty internalizing grammatical features that are not explicitly marked in Indonesian. In Arabic, gender and number are grammatical features integrated into verb and noun forms, whereas in Indonesian these features are not morphologically required. As a result, learners tend to omit or misapply these markings, reflecting simplification strategies in interlanguage.

Nominal derivation errors indicate that learners have difficulty understanding the semantic relationship between word roots and derivational patterns. For example, the substitution of the pattern maf῾al with maf῾alah indicates a failure in mapping morphological patterns to their correct lexical meanings. This phenomenon indicates that learners have not yet developed stable morphosemantic representations in their mental lexicon. These errors also reflect limitations in non-linear morphological processing, which is cognitively more complex than linear morphology. These morphological errors reflect strategies of overgeneralization of grammatical rules and morphological analogies. Learners tend to apply the most frequently encountered morphological patterns in inappropriate cases, which is a characteristic of interlanguage development at the intermediate stage. In addition, person agreement errors indicate that learners have not fully

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integrated person features in written language production, which can be associated with limitations in grammatical processing in written production.

This morphosemantic analysis also shows that morphological errors are not only formal in nature but also impact the interpretation of meaning. Derivational and inflectional errors can alter the semantic relations between predicates and arguments in a sentence, thus affecting the acceptability and clarity of the message. Thus, the complexity of Arabic morphology is a major factor limiting the accuracy of students' written language production. These findings emphasize that Arabic instruction for Austronesian speakers should emphasize explicit mapping between morphological patterns and semantic functions. These findings support the assumption that non-linear morphology is one of the most difficult aspects of Semitic language acquisition for non-Semitic speakers. Systematic errors in inflection, derivation, and agreement indicate that learners have not fully developed abstract morphological representations in their interlanguage system. Furthermore, the dominance of simplification and overgeneralization strategies suggests that learners rely on universal cognitive strategies in second language acquisition. These findings provide an empirical contribution to the literature on Arabic morphological acquisition by demonstrating how Austronesian learners process and map morphosemantic patterns.

Interlanguage Phenomena and Syntactic Barriers

Syntactic error analysis indicates that students develop an interlanguage system that reflects a complex interaction between native and target language rules. Although the percentage of syntactic errors is lower than phonological and morphological errors, the errors that do occur are systematic and have significant implications for grammatical acceptability and clarity of meaning. Syntactic errors primarily occur in word order, pronoun use, predicate construction, and preposition use. This error pattern indicates that the transfer of Indonesian language structures plays a dominant role in the formation of students' Arabic sentence structures.

Typologically Indonesian has a relatively flexible syntactic structure with a basic SVO pattern and minimal grammatical inflection, while Arabic has a variety of word orders (VSO, SVO) with a complex agreement system. This difference creates challenges for learners in mapping the syntactic structure of their native language to the target language. Students tend to retain the SVO structure of Indonesian and ignore the predication patterns typical of Arabic, particularly in verb and nominal constructions (Zahran & Jamoussi, 2022). This shows that the syntactic structure of the mother tongue functions as the initial framework in the learner's interlanguage system.

Students' syntactic errors are primarily related to failures in applying the Arabic agreement system, particularly in terms of person, number, and gender. Subject-verb agreement errors indicate that learners have not fully integrated the grammatical feature of the subject in the verb form, which is a mandatory feature in Arabic but is not morphologically marked in Indonesian. This phenomenon reflects a syntactic simplification strategy in learners' interlanguage, where learners tend to reduce the complexity of grammatical structures to reduce cognitive load. Word order errors indicate a direct transfer from Indonesian SVO patterns to Arabic, which in many formalities prefer VSO patterns. Although modern Arabic also allows SVO patterns, these errors indicate learners' lack of sensitivity to syntactic and pragmatic variations in the target language. This word order transfer indicates that learners use the syntactic structure of their native language

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as a default setting in target language production. This phenomenon is in line with the hypothesis of syntactic transfer in second language acquisition.

Table 5. Syntactic Error Patterns in Students' Arabic Sentence Production

Target Structure	Student Production	Syntactic Analysis	Type of Error
إِنَّ الطُّلَّابَ الَّذِينَ يَدْرُسُونَ فِي الْجَامِعَةِ نَاجِحُونَ	إِنَّ الطُّلَّابُ الَّذِينَ يَدْرُسُونَ فِي الْجَامِعَةِ نَاجِحُونَ	Case marking failure after إِنَّ (accusative requirement)	Case marking error
يَجِبُ أَنْ يُنْجِزَ الطُّلَّابُ الْبَحْثَ قَبْلَ نِهَايَةِ الْفَصْلِ	يَجِبُ أَنْ يُنْجِزُ الطُّلَّابُ الْبَحْثَ قَبْلَ نِهَايَةِ الْفَصْلِ	Subjunctive mood error after أَنْ	Mood marking error
الْكِتَابُ الَّذِي قَرَأْتُهُ مُفِيدٌ	الْكِتَابُ الَّذِي قَرَأْتُ مُفِيدٌ	Relative pronoun object deletion	Relative clause error
فِي الْجَامِعَةِ يَدْرُسُ الطُّلَّابُ اللُّغَةَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ	الطُّلَّابُ يَدْرُسُونَ اللُّغَةَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ فِي الْجَامِعَةِ	Topicalization structure avoidance (VSO vs SVO parameters)	Word order transfer
لَمْ يَكُنِ الْأُسْتَاذُ حَاضِرًا فِي الْمُحَاضَرَةِ	لَمْ يَكُونُ الْأُسْتَاذُ حَاضِرًا فِي الْمُحَاضَرَةِ	Auxiliary verb inflection error (kana-jussive)	Auxiliary inflection error
هَذَا الْمَقَالُ الَّذِي كَتَبْتُهُ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ السَّابِقِ	هَذَا الْمَقَالُ الَّذِي كَتَبْتُ أَفْضَلُ مِنَ السَّابِقِ	Resumptive pronoun omission in relative clause	Resumptive pronoun deletion

Prepositional misuse indicates that learners experience difficulties in mapping Indonesian semantic-spatial relations into the Arabic prepositional system. Indonesian uses relatively polysemic prepositions such as di and ke, while Arabic has a more specific prepositional system. As a result, learners tend to directly transfer native language prepositions into Arabic, resulting in non-idiomatic constructions. This error suggests that semantic interference plays a significant role in syntactic errors. The copula overuse phenomenon indicates that learners tend to insert explicit copula elements into Arabic nominal sentences, which in many cases do not require a copula verb in the present tense. This error demonstrates the transfer of predicative structures from Indonesian to English, where copulas are often used explicitly. This indicates that learners rely on cross-language analogy strategies in constructing syntactic structures in the target language.

From the perspective of interlanguage theory, these syntactic errors indicate that the learner's language system is in a restructuring stage, where the rules of the native language are still dominant but are beginning to be intervened by the rules of the target language. The learner's interlanguage system exhibits systematic, dynamic, and permeable characteristics to linguistic input. The errors that emerge are not random errors, but reflections of internal grammatical hypotheses that the learner constructs based on limited input. Thus, syntactic errors can be used as indicators of the development of grammatical structures in the learner's interlanguage. This finding supports the view that syntactic transfer from the native language is a major factor in the acquisition of second-language sentence structures. The dominance of agreement and word order errors indicates that the learner experiences difficulties in internalizing the syntactic parameters of Arabic, which are typologically different from those of Indonesian. Furthermore, the preposition and copula errors indicate that the learner uses a cross-language analogy strategy to compensate for limited syntactic representation. This finding makes an empirical contribution to the study of interlanguage by showing how Austronesian-speaking learners construct a transitional syntactic system in Arabic acquisition.

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Psycholinguistic Factors and Language Anxiety

Psycholinguistic factor analysis indicates that affective variables, particularly foreign language anxiety, play a significant role in shaping students' linguistic error patterns. Perception questionnaire data indicate that most students report moderate to high levels of anxiety in using Arabic, particularly in speaking and academic writing. This anxiety encompasses the dimensions of communication anxiety, negative evaluation anxiety, and exam anxiety, which collectively influence students' language production strategies. These findings suggest that linguistic errors are not only structural in nature but also influenced by cognitive-affective factors that inhibit language processing.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Foreign Language Anxiety Dimensions

Dimensions of Anxiety	Mean	Elementary School
Oral communication anxiety	4.12	0.68
Anxiety about lecturer/peer evaluation	3.85	0.72
Arabic exam anxiety	3.91	0.64
Avoidance of complex structures	3.76	0.70
Overall average	**3.91**	—

The results in the table show that oral communication anxiety had the highest score, indicating that students experienced significant psychological distress when having to produce Arabic spontaneously. Evaluation anxiety was also relatively high, indicating that perceptions of social and academic judgment contributed to language production limitations. Complex structure avoidance scores indicated that students strategically simplified grammatical structures to reduce the risk of errors, which directly impacted linguistic accuracy. These findings suggest that language anxiety functions as an affective filter that hinders the processing of linguistic input and output.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation between Foreign Language Anxiety and Linguistic Errors

Variables	r (Pearson)	p-value
Anxiety – A Mistake in Words	0.62	< 0.001
Anxiety – Bible Mistakes	0.45	< 0.01
Anxiety – Phonological Errors	0.39	< 0.05

Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between anxiety levels and the number of linguistic errors, particularly in speaking and writing. The strong correlation in speaking skills indicates that communication anxiety directly hinders the fluency and accuracy of spoken language production. The moderate correlation in writing skills indicates that evaluative stress also influences the planning and processing of written language structures. The relationship between anxiety and phonological errors suggests that affective factors also influence phonetics, possibly through reduced attention and articulatory control. These findings support the Affective Filter hypothesis, which states that affective factors can hinder the processing of linguistic input and hinder the internalization of target language rules (Stander, 2022). High anxiety causes learners to avoid using complex structures and reduce language production, which in turn slows down interlanguage development. Furthermore, this finding aligns with the concept of Willingness to Communicate, where learners with high anxiety show a low tendency to participate in target language interactions (Wang dkk., 2022).

Psychometric analysis shows that language anxiety serves as a mediating variable between linguistic input and students' performative output. In other words, although students receive sufficient linguistic input through the formal curriculum, anxiety hinders the transformation of that

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input into productive competencies. This phenomenon explains why linguistic errors remain persistent despite high learning intensity. Therefore, psycholinguistic factors should be considered as an integral component in Arabic language pedagogical design. These findings provide an empirical contribution to the study of Arabic language acquisition by demonstrating that affective variables interact with structural linguistic factors in shaping learners' error patterns. The significant relationship between anxiety and linguistic errors suggests that language acquisition is not only a structural process, but also a cognitive-affective process (Zhi & Wu, 2023). This finding broadens the understanding of interlanguage by positioning affective factors as determinants of the development of learners' language systems (González & Martínez, 2020). Thus, this study emphasizes the need for a pedagogical approach that focuses not only on language structure, but also on managing the learner's affective factors.

CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively reveals that linguistic errors of Arabic language learners at the tertiary level are a multidimensional phenomenon involving complex interactions between phonological, morphosemantic, syntactic, interlanguage, and psycholinguistic variables. The analysis results indicate that mother tongue interference significantly affects the production of phonological and syntactic structures, while the complexity of the Arabic morphological system contributes to persistent derivational and inflectional errors in written language. The identified interlanguage phenomenon indicates that learners construct a temporary, systematic linguistic system, but it has not yet been fully internalized according to the norms of the target language, resulting in stable and predictable error patterns. In addition, affective factors, particularly language anxiety, are shown to have a significant correlation with the frequency and types of linguistic errors, indicating that language acquisition is not only structural-cognitive, but also strongly influenced by the learner's psychological dimensions. The pedagogical implications of these findings emphasize the need for an integrative, empirically evidence-based approach to Arabic language learning that is sensitive to the typological characteristics of the language and the psycholinguistic profiles of learners, including explicit phonetic training, strengthening morphological awareness, syntactic restructuring through a contrastive approach, and affective interventions to reduce communication anxiety. Theoretically, this study broadens the understanding of Arabic as a foreign language acquisition by integrating structural and affective linguistic perspectives within an interlanguage framework, and provides an empirical contribution to the development of a pedagogical model for Arabic language learning for Austronesian language learners. Thus, this study not only enriches the literature on second language acquisition but also provides a conceptual and practical basis for curriculum innovation and Arabic language teaching strategies in higher education.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

All participants received a comprehensive explanation regarding the research objectives and procedures, including their right to participate voluntarily. Participants were assured that participation was not mandatory and that they had the right to withdraw at any time during the study without negative consequences. To ensure the confidentiality of identities, all data obtained in this study underwent an anonymization process.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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