

## **ERRORS IN INDONESIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS BY STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**\*M Fajar Kurniawan Lubis**

**\*\*Masitowarni Siregar**

**\*\*Indra Hartoyo**

### **ABSTRACT**

This research was aimed to analyze errors made by students in translating Indonesian text to English using the classification made by Gentzler. The subject of this research was students who took Translation subject in 2018/2019 academic year in English Education study program in State University of Medan. The instrument of collecting data was a translation test from Indonesian to English consisting of three genres: narrative, descriptive, and analytical exposition. 30 students were divided into 3 groups of 10, each translating different genres. The errors in translations were classified into five types of errors as classified by Gentzler. The result showed that inversion, omission, addition, deviation, and modification errors were found in students' translations. Deviation and modification errors formed 90% of all errors combined. The errors were caused by interlingual and intralingual interference. They were collocational errors, choosing inappropriate meaning when looking up the dictionary, word per word translation, and overgeneralization.

***Key words:*** *Translation, Errors in Translation, English Education Study Program*

---

\*Graduate status

\*\*Lecturer status

## INTRODUCTION

### *Background of Study*

Translation is an important part of language in order to communicate and convey information and culture between nations. Translation is transfer of meaning from the source text to target text. According to Nida & Taber (1982), “translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.”

Translation is also important in helping students to help students’ language acquisition. Translation use in classroom to facilitate second or foreign language learning is called pedagogical translation. Leonardii (2011) posits that pedagogical translation can be used at any level of proficiency and in any educational context as a valuable teaching method and to support the four traditional language skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. As such, English Department in general and English Education Study Program in particular offers Translation as one of the courses.

Unfortunately, as future teachers who will use pedagogical translation, students of English Education Study Program still make errors in their translations.

Indonesian schools’ English curriculum includes short and long functional texts to be learned by the students. Similarly, in order to prepare future teachers, Translation course in English Education Study Program of State University of Medan also includes functional texts (Siregar, 2018). In this study, narrative, descriptive, and analytical exposition were picked to be translated by the students and analyzed.

The researcher intended to conduct the study to analyze the errors made by students of English Education Study Program in their translations. The research aimed to answer: 1) What types of errors were made by the students in translating narrative, descriptive, and analytical exposition Indonesian texts to English? 2) How are the errors realized in narrative, descriptive, and analytical exposition texts translations?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Errors and Error analysis**

Errors in the context of language learning are noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker. They reflect the competence level of the speaker and are systematic, i.e. they occur repeatedly and can not be recognized by the speaker themselves. As such, errors can not be self-corrected by the speaker. (Corder in Gass & Selinker, 2008)

Analyzing the errors made by students provides a window to see the learners' current knowledge level. Corder in Brown (2000) noted that "learners' errors provide evidence how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language". This analysis of errors is simply called error analysis.

Error analysis typically consists of 5 or 6 steps according to Gass & Selinker (2008). They are collecting the data, identifying the errors, classifying the errors, quantifying the errors, analyzing the source of errors, and potentially remediating the problem.

### **Classification of Errors**

The classification of errors differ from one study to another depending on the focus of the study. This study focused on the meaning and used the classification used by Gentzler as was used in Salam (2017). The errors are classified into inversion, addition, omission, deviation, and modification of meanings.

Inversion of meaning happens when the meaning found in target text directly contradicts the meaning in source text. Addition of meaning is the presence of an idea which is not present in the source text in the target text. Conversely, omission of meaning is the omission of an idea in source text. Deviation of meaning is a change of meaning from source text to the target text. Modification of meaning happens when the expression in English does not convey a clear meaning or choosing incorrect derivation.

### **Causes of Errors**

According to Gass & Selinker (2008), there are two main causes of error within an error analysis framework: interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual errors are those which can be attributed to the native language (i.e., they involve cross-linguistic comparisons). Intralingual errors are those that are due to the language being learned, independent of the native language.

Interlingual errors between Indonesian and English for example may happen because of the noun phrase structure. In Indonesian, noun phrases with adjective come in the form of N-Adj, for example: baju baru, mobil merah. In English, noun phrases with adjective come in the form of Adj-N, for example: new dress, red car. This difference may be causing error where the learners form English noun phrase as in Indonesian, i.e. \*dress new, \*car red.

Intralingual errors may happen due to overgeneralization of rules. A learner who has learned that regular past participle is formed by adding -ed to the verb may generalize this rule and apply it to irregular verb. That is, learner produce \*runned, \*catched, and \*singed because they have not learned that not all verbs have regular past participle form. Another example is in pluralisation and applying -s/es to nouns with irregular plural form like child, tooth, and goose.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was a qualitative descriptive research conducted by identifying and analyzing the errors found in translations made by students. It followed the steps in error analysis as proposed by Gass & Selinker (2008): collect the data, identify errors, classify errors, quantify errors, and analyze the errors. The errors were classified into classification by Gatzler, consisting of inversion, addition, omission, deviation, and modification of meaning.

The subject of the study was students of English Education Study Program who took Translation course in 2018/2019 Academic Year. Thirty (30) students were taken randomly from one out of five classes who took the course in 2018/2019 Academic Year.

The instrument was translation task in the form of a long functional text in the narrative, descriptive, and analytical exposition text to be translated into English. Each genre of text was translated by 10 students.

After the data was collected, the researcher identified the errors made and classify them to Gentzler's classification. The number of errors was counted and the percentage of each type compared to total number of errors was calculated. Finally, the source of errors were analyzed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Research Findings

#### *Narrative text*

The following table is the summary of errors found in students' translation of narrative text.

Table 1 Errors in translation in narrative text

Error type	Number of errors by student										Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Inversion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0 %)
Omission	0	1	0	1	1	2	4	3	1	1	1.4 (21.5%)
Addition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0 %)
Deviation	1	1	3	5	0	4	2	5	0	0	2.1 (32.3 %)
Modification	2	4	2	0	2	6	6	4	2	2	3.0 (46.1 %)
Total	3	6	5	6	3	12	12	12	3	3	6.5 (100%)

Deviation and modification forms the majority of students errors, combined forming 78% of all errors. Examples of the errors found can be seen in the following table:

Table 2 Errors examples in narrative text

Source text	Student Translation	Error type	Explanation
<i>Abah tinggal di rumah yang cukup besar</i>	Abah lived in a <u>big house</u>	Omission	Omission of the meaning <i>cukup</i> (big enough house, pretty big house)
	Abah lives in a <u>big house</u>		
<i>Perlahan tapi</i>	<u>Slowly</u> , ...	Omission	Omission of the meaning

<i>pasti, ...</i>			<i>pasti</i> (slowly but surely)
<i>Mereka hidup rukun dan berkecukupan</i>	They live <u>harmonious</u> and well off.	Modification	Misformation of the adverb ‘harmoniously’
	They life <u>harmonious</u> and <u>adequate</u>	Modification	Misformation of the adverb ‘adequately’
<i>Suatu hari, rekan kerja Ayah mengkhianatinya</i>	One day, his business partner <u>traitorous</u> him	Modification	Misformation of the verb ‘betrayed’
<i>Abah tinggal di rumah yang cukup besar</i>	father life in one of <u>house big</u>	Modification	Misformation of noun phrase ‘big house’ (modifier – head)
<i>...harta pribadi keluarga Abah berhasil direbutnya</i>	...Abah’s family’s personal property he <u>won</u>	Deviation	Change of meaning from <i>direbut</i> (seize, take) to ‘win’, suggesting a positive context
<i>...rekan kerja Abah mengkhianatinya.</i>	Abah’s partner <u>abuse</u> him	Deviation	Change of meaning from betrayal to abuse

The omission errors were clustered in the same sentence *Abah tinggal di rumah yang cukup besar* by omitting the modifier *cukup* (pretty, enough). Modification of errors were mainly made by misformation of word or using incorrect derived form or word class, such as using life, harmonious, and adequate when they should be live, harmoniously, and adequately.

Misformation of noun phrase by putting the modifier after the noun (house big) was also found. This happens because of interference from Indonesian syntax in which the modifier is placed after the noun.

Deviation errors were changes in meaning. It was found that these were mostly caused by choosing incorrect word in context in the dictionary, thus changing the meaning. For example, in the sentence *Ayah memulai usahanya lagi*, a student translated usaha (meaning business or trade in this context) to effort and another student translated it to attempt.

*Descriptive text*

The following table summarizes the errors found in students' translation of descriptive text:

Table 3 Errors in translation in descriptive text

Error type	Number of errors by students										Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Inversion	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.1 (1.5%)
Omission	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.5 (7.4 %)
Addition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deviation	2	3	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1.1 (16.4%)
Modification	3	9	7	7	0	3	11	6	4	0	5.0 (74.6%)
Total	5	13	9	7	6	5	11	7	4	0	6.7 (100%)

Modification and deviation error formed the majority of errors, totaling 90% of all errors. Examples of the errors can be seen in the following table

Table 4 Errors examples in descriptive text

Source text	Student translation	Error type	Explanation
<i>...letaknya yang tidak berada di pusat kota</i>	... located in the city center	Inversion	Inversion of meaning from <u>NOT in the city center</u> to <u>in the city center</u>
<i>... suasana belajar mengajar akan lebih nyaman karena terhindar dari kebisingan kendaraan</i>	Student also comfortable in learning process	Omission	Omission of a clause (because of little/no traffic noise)
<i>SMA Negeri 2 Tuban memiliki luas tanah seluas kurang lebih satu hektar...</i>	This school has <u>wide ground</u> less than 1 hectare	Deviation	Change of meaning from area to wide ground
	... have a <u>wide land</u> around 1 hectare	Deviation	Change of meaning from area to wide land
<i>...seluas kurang lebih satu hektar</i>	...less than 1 hectare	Deviation	Change of meaning from approximately to less than
	...less of 1 hectare		
<i>... dan lima bangunan utama</i>	& five <u>building important</u>	Modification	Misformation of noun phrase
<i>... sekolah terbaik di</i>	... <u>school the</u>	Modification	Misformation of noun

<i>Tuban</i>	<u>best</u> in Tuban		phrase
<i>lapangan voli</i>	volleyball square	Modification	Incorrect collocational use (volleyball court)
	volleyball yard		
	volley field		
<i>...peserta didik mampu mengeksplorasi pelajaran</i>	...student able to <u>explore</u> the lesson	Modification	Misformation of verb explore
	... students able to <u>exploration</u> lesson		

Some students made deviation errors in translating *luas tanah* to *wide land*, *large field*, and some other variation of it. This was likely caused by translating the Indonesian phrase *luas tanah* (area) by translating the individual words *luas* (wide, large) and *tanah* (ground)

Intralingual interference were seen in translation of *mengeksplorasi* translated to explore. The student incorrectly generalized –ate verb forming suffix to explore. Some interlingual interference also where some verbs ending in –ate are translated to Indonesian with suffix –asi, for example discriminate (*diskriminasi*), allocate (*alokasi*), and intimidate (*intimidasi*). These interferences can also be seen in *mendaftar*(*registrasi*) as registrate and *fasilitas* as facilitate or fasilitate.

Collocational errors caused errors in phrases such as lapangan voli, lapangan basket, and lapangan bola. Students translated lapangan as field or ground (general open area) and not as a phrase in which *lapangan* means play area and should be translated according to the sport, i.e. volleyball court, basketball court, and soccer/football pitch.



### *Analytical Exposition Text*

The following table summarizes the errors made by students in analytical exposition text.

Table 5 Errors in translations in analytical exposition text

Error type	Number of errors										Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Inversion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Omission	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.2 (5.4 %)
Addition	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1 (2.7 %)
Deviation	2	2	3	1	1	4	2	2	0	0	1.7 (45.9 %)
Modification	0	0	6	0	2	3	2	4	0	0	1.7 (45.9 %)
Total	3	2	9	2	4	7	4	6	0	0	3.7 (100 %)

Deviation and modification errors formed total of 91.8 % of all errors. The following table contains some examples of the errors made by students in translating analytical exposition text

Table 6 Errors examples in analytical exposition text

Source text	Student Translation	Error type	Explanation
<i>Setiap negara mempunyai tim nasional masing masing</i>	<u>Some of country</u> have each national group	Deviation	Change in meaning from all countries having their own national team to only some.
<i>...mengibarkan bendera nasional negaranya</i>	... flutter his national country flag	Deviation	Change in meaning because of contextual difference. Collocational error.
<i>...adalah keuntungan dalam mendorong nasionalisme bangsa</i>	... national <u>profit</u> to support ...	Deviation	Change in meaning. Choosing incorrect word from dictionary
	... is a <u>luck</u> in encourage ...		
	... is a <u>profit</u> in providing ...		
<i>Bendera dan lagu kebangsaan adalah simbol suatu</i>	Flag and <u>nationality</u> is a symbol of a state	Deviation	Change in meaning from national anthem to nationality

<i>Negara</i>	Flag and <u>national sing</u> ...	Modification	Collocational use is national anthem
	Flag and <u>nationalism song</u> ...		
	Flag and <u>song of nationalism</u> ...		
<i>Perlombaan olahraga ini diikuti oleh warga...</i>	This event sport <u>followed by</u> citizen	Deviation	Change in meaning. Choosing the incorrect word from dictionary
	This competition was <u>followed by</u> residents		
<i>...kehormatan untuk dirinya sendiri</i>	... <u>honorable</u> to itself	Modification	Misformation of the noun honour/honor
<i>Olahraga tidak hanya membuat badan kuat dan sehat</i>	Sport not only to make our body strong and <u>health</u>	Modification	Misformation of adjective healthy
<i>Perlombaan olahraga</i>	Event sport	Modification	Misformation of noun phrase

Choosing incorrect word or meaning from dictionary created deviation errors where the chosen word is not the correct word to use in the context. This can be seen in *keuntungan dalam mendorong nasionalisme* (advantage/benefit in this context) translated to profit (*keuntungan* in economic context).

### Recapitulation

The result of each genre is recapitulated in the table below

Table 7 Errors recapitulation

Error type	Narrative text average	Descriptive text average	Analytical exposition text average	All genre average
Inversion	0	0.1 (1.5%)	0	0.03 (0.5 %)
Omission	1.4 (21.5%)	0.5 (7.4 %)	0.2 (5.4 %)	0.70 (12.4 %)
Addition	0	0	0.1 (2.7%)	0.03 (0.5 %)
Deviation	2.1 (32.3 %)	1.1 (16.4 %)	1.7 (45.9 %)	1.30 (23 %)
Modification	3 (46.2 %)	5 (74.6 %)	1.7 (45.9 %)	3.16 (56.1 %)
Total	6.5	6.7	3.7	5.63

As can be seen in the table, all error types were found in this study. Omission, deviation, and modification errors were found in all genres while inversion and addition errors were only found in descriptive and analytical exposition text respectively.

In all three genres, deviation and modification errors formed the majority of the errors. Combined they form 88%, 91%, and 91% of all errors for narrative, descriptive, and analytical exposition text respectively. As a whole, they formed 90.6% of all errors.

The ratio between modification and deviation error was found to be higher in descriptive text compared to analytical and narrative texts. This was likely due to higher frequency of nominal phrases and interlingual interference in forming nominal phrases.

The errors were caused by interlingual and intralingual interferences. Interlingual interferences included collocational error, misformation of noun phrase and using wrong class of word, choosing incorrect meaning from dictionary, and translating a phrase word per word. Intralingual interference included overgeneralizing rules, resulting in misformation of words.

## **Discussion**

After analyzing the data, it was found that deviation and modification errors formed the majority of errors in all three genres. Combined, they comprised 90 % of all errors found in the students translation. This is in line with the study by Salam, et al. (2017) who studied translation errors using crowdsourcing, in which deviation and modification of meaning were the majority and formed 73.2% of all errors. In descriptive genre in particular, modification errors found were almost quadruple the number of deviation error. In the other two genres, deviation and modification had similar number of errors.

The causes of errors were grouped into interlingual and intralingual interference. Interlingual interferences found were collocational errors, not choosing the correct meaning when looking up from dictionary (profit for keuntungan when the context calls for benefit), and translating a phrase word per

word, and misformation of noun phrases like *rumah besar* to *house big* which is using Indonesian syntax of placing adjective after the noun as opposed to English syntax of adjective before the noun. Intralingual errors were found in which some students generalized the verb forming suffix incorrectly. The causes of errors were similar to Cuc (2018) and Popescu (2013) who found that the most common errors were rendition of lexical items and collocational errors and attributed them to both interlingual and intralingual interference.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

It can be concluded that the types of errors found in students' translations were inversion, omission, addition, deviation, and modification errors. Omission, deviation, and modification errors were present in all three genres. Deviation and modification errors formed the majority of all errors. The errors were caused by interlingual and intralingual interferences. Interlingual interferences included collocational error, misformation of noun phrase and using wrong class of word, choosing incorrect meaning from dictionary, and translating a phrase word per word. Intralingual interference included overgeneralizing rules, resulting in misformation of words.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the conclusions the suggestions are for the students to read more text in English to internalize the collocations and syntax of English. The teachers are suggested to give more focus on differences between Indonesian and English syntax and collocations by providing more text to read and encouraging the students to read more.

## REFERENCES

- Brown, Douglas H. 2000. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, 4th ed.* New York: Longman
- Gass, Susan and Selinker, Larry. 2008. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course.* New York: Routledge
- Cuc, Pham Thi Kim. 2018. "An Analysis of Translation Errors: A Case Study of Vietnamese EFL Students". *International Journal of English Linguistics Vol 8 No 1 2018* pp. 22-29.
- Leonardii, Vanessa. 2011. "Pedagogical Translation as a Naturally-Occuring Cognitive and Linguistic Activity in Foreign Language Learning". *Annali Online di Lettere-Ferrara Vol 1-2 2011* pp. 17-28.
- Nida, Eugene A. and Taber, Charles R. 1982. *The Theory and Practice of Translation.* Leiden: E.J. Brill
- Popescu, Teodora. 2013. "A Corpus-based Approach to Translation Error Analysis. A Case-study of Romanian EFL Learners". *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences 83 (2013)* pp. 242-247.
- Salam, Zainar M, *et al.* 2017. "Translation Errors Made by Indonesian English Translators in Crowdsourcing Translation Application" in *ELT Worldwide Vol.4 No. 2 2017* pp. 1-15.
- Siregar, Masitowarni. 2018. *Bahan Ajar Translation I.* Medan: UNIMED
- Siregar, Masitowarni. 2018. *Bahan Ajar Translation II.* Medan: UNIMED