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Grammar Error Patterns in The English Translation of The Maluku Folktale Batu Penyu

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the author examines the grammatical errors from the perspective of semantics, wrong meaning substitution, phrases, idioms, and other parts of the English translation of the Moluccan (*Maluku*) folktale *Batu Penyu* in terms of pedagogical translation structure and cultural heritage preservation. This study describes the systematic errors found in the translation from Indonesian and local languages of folktales into English that can reduce clarity and diminish comprehension value in the context of translation as an educational text for young learners. The study is set up as a descriptive qualitative analysis with AI, helps by ChatGPT-4Turbo and Gemini Advanced, spotting mistakes in a language system changed by Hawkins and Norton (2020) using a comparing method marked by G1 through G10 in the form of neat tables. There were 20 grammar mistakes; 5 syntax errors were the most major type followed by 4 lexical difficulty issues and 3 semantic mismatch cases. Findings from this study further illuminate the presence of cross-cultural language adaptation issues concerning idiomatic expressions and references. This study greatly contributes to the ongoing academic conversation regarding how appropriate translation can foster English as a Second Language acquisition and intercultural communication.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally folktales translated into English act as dual preserves and educative enhancers for second language learners. The folktale *Batu Penyu* from Moluccan (*Maluku*) translated from local languages and Indonesian into English (Ohoiwutun, 2021) creates not only a meaningful narrative culturally and morally but also a valuable linguistic resource to appreciating the grammatical correctness of translated educational texts (Thren, 2025). It gives authentic materials that can help in improving both linguistic and cultural competence through education on languages (Babazade, 2024). This paper tries to analyze grammatical error patterns in English *Batu Penyu* Story through AI ChatGPT-4Turbo Gemini Advanced. The moral message of the story must be well brought out to the readers through accurate translation and cultural reflections. Jiao et al. (2023) noted that “ChatGPT with the GPT-4 engine delivered the top outcomes in the matter of language translation, as against prior versions.” Further, research by Jageer (2025) demonstrated that Gemini Advanced carries an added advantage for keeping sentence formation and the choice of words more apt for the context of translation. In the context of the story of *Batu Penyu*, this application will allow the researcher to check the grammatical structure in a more organized way, especially to find the error which is of latent or invisible nature for ordinary humans.

Translation English is influenced by Indonesian or other local languages, causing structural mismatches that lead to a number of grammatical errors, such as subject-predicate imprecision, tense usage errors, and article and preposition usage errors (Maniar et al.; Wang et al., 2021). These patterns prove the existence of syntactically relevant differences between the mother tongue and the target language and the translator's competence in English grammar. The errors provide many opportunities, especially in education, to recognize them in order to develop good pedagogical strategies in translation training and grammar teaching. Moreover, critical appraisal has indicated that grammatical accuracy in translations, such as the *Batu Penyu* translation, is integral to the development of the narrative and, hence, the delivery of its moral message. Fitria, Samudra, & Mutiarsih (2021), Bryant et al. (2023) also emphasize that small errors in sentence structure can lead to semantic distortions that hide the moral message of the story. In this sense, Thren (2025) accentuated the need for culturally sensitive translation, to keep the power of folktale for the setting of modern, changed education. So this study is, yes, not just a part of a language teaching program but a real form of concrete, active preservation, through an adaptive, critical use of technology.

Technology, for example, BERT-based systems for finding automatic grammatical error support has a hand in spotting these issues (He, 2021; Qing, 2024) but human translations especially those which bear cultural shades are still complex and need deep linguistic analysis. Not just that, the analysis of

grammatical errors in translated text provides insight into the cognitive process of learners and the pedagogical value of materials as well. Traditional stories must be grammatically correct to maintain narrative integrity and preserve the moral clarity with which they are told; such stories often provide avenues for character-building and literacy development (Fitria, Samudra, & Mutiarsih, 2021; Thren, 2025). The successful translation of *Batu Penyu* will ensure that its ethical messages and cultural reflections are perceived by younger readers. As Bryant et al. (2023) argue, minor grammatical inaccuracies do lead to semantic distortions, thereby undermining the text's educative value. Thus, an exploration into grammatical error patterns in such translated text proves a worthwhile venture towards language education and the transmission of culture (Chen, Y. 2023; Babazade, Y., 2024; Thren, A. 2025). Further, results from grammatical errors identified in *Batu Penyu* serve another avenue for creating contextual pedagogical materials, assisting students' grammar not as an isolated unit but through meaningful texts. As Chen (2023) and Babazade (2024) noted, the use of real materials from local culture works great in making students more motivated to learn. This study also helps new translators get better by showing them common mistakes and how to fix those using AI tools. ChatGPT-4-Turbo and Gemini Advanced give us new chances for joining automatic translation checking with a slower, more thoughtful way of teaching.

Translated texts have lexical and grammatical accuracy, but it is the analysis of errors that has much to offer in terms of revealing the cognitive processes of language learners and the pedagogical value of authentic material. In terms of grammatical accuracy, it is such a significant factor in maintaining not only the narrative integrity but also the moral clarity of traditional stories, which are frequently implemented for character building and literacy skills (Fitria; Samudra, & Mutiarsih, 2021; Thren, 2025). With *Batu Penyu*, sound translation enables its moral beliefs and cultural traditions to be properly addressed by readers of the young age range. As noted by Bryant et al. (2023), there will be very small grammatical inconsistencies producing unwanted semantic modifications and subtle threats for the education value the text could want to carry out. Therefore, an exploration for patterns of grammatical errors in translated materials is imperative to enhance language education and cultural dissemination (Chen, 2023; Babazade, 2024; Thren, 2025). Furthermore, the performance of the grammatical mistake detection of *Batu Penyu* as contextualized teaching materials for students to learn grammar not merely as a detached entity, but in meaningful texts. The other reason is related to the effectiveness of local authentic materials in motivating students to learn which has been mentioned by Chen (2023) and Babazade (2024). Similarly, this study is also helpful for the training of young translators, having shown typical errors and its correction based on AI analysis. The adoption of ChatGPT-4-Turbo and Gemini Advanced positions automatic translation assessment as a tool that can be much more closely integrated with context and reflection in the teaching process.

METHOD

This study applied qualitative analysis to the specific translational inaccuracies of English *Batu Penyu: A Maluku Folktale*. The researcher chose this

method because it allows researchers to examine certain linguistic phenomena (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2018). The research method was adapted from Hawkins et al. (2020) to ensure that the meaning and intent of the translated texts does not changed from the source texts.

Subject

The focus of this research was an English translation of the folktale *Batu Penyu* from *Maluku*, done in a local dialect as well as in Indonesian (Ohoiwutun, 2021). The English version adapted for children was chosen for analysis because of its pedagogical and cultural significance, as well as because it demonstrated from inaccurate methods of translation. Instead of involving participants, the scope of the study was the translated text considered as the only participant. This text was selected intentionally to analyze the impact of grammatical structures within the translation on clarity and comprehension among learners of English.

Instruments

The instrument of this study was the English version of the folktale *Batu Penyu* (Ohoiwutun, 2021). Gemini and ChatGPT were used as two of the AI grammar check for grammatical error detection (Google, 2025; OpenAI, 2025). The application of AI technologies in language education and linguistic research has been underscored in previous studies which detail their usefulness and efficiency in pedagogical practices focused on identifying errors (Anh, 2024; Fitria, 2025; Kucuk, 2023). AI tools contributed to the detection of grammatical errors, however, the interpretation and classification of these errors performed manually by the researchers.

Data analysis procedures

For the data analysis procedures the researcher pulled out English sentences from *Batu Penyu's* translation. Every single sentence was analyzed with the AI to identify grammatical errors. The errors that were found were organized in the framework G1–G10 which has been adapted from Hawkins et al. (2020). The researchers explained each error, specified what was incorrect and made suggestions on how to enhance clarity, correctness, and cultural context of the sentence. To determine common patterns emerging from the data, the particular frequency of each error type was documented.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the English translated version of *Batu Penyu* folktale (Ohoiwutun, 2021), a corpus search identified 20 total errors that are categorised through adapting a modified framework of error coding framework inspired by Hawkins and Norton (2020) (G1–G10). Table 2 lists the errors detected and their grammatical codes, descriptions and corrections. The frequency distribution of errors per grammar category is presented below:

Table 1. Structured error-coding framework inspired by Hawkins and Norton (G1–G10) (Hawkins and Norton, 2020)

Grammar Code	Category	Frequency
G1	Complex word or phrase	2
G2	Cultural	1
G3	Grammar	5
G4	Idiom/literal meaning	2
G5	Measurement	1
G6	Printed error	1
G7	Semantic	3
G8	Extra meaning added	1
G9	Meaning left out	1
G10	Wrong meaning substitution	1

Table 2. Grammar check using ChatGPT-4-Turbo free version and Gemini AI Advanced version.

Page	Original Translation	ChatGPT -4- Turbo free version Correction Translation	Gemini Advanced version. by Google AI Correction Translation	Reasons
Page 1	<i>"Once upon a time, there was an old woman who lived in a village in Kei Kecil Island."</i>	<i>"Once upon a time, there was an old woman who lived in a village on Kei Kecil Island."</i>	<i>"Once upon a time, there was an old woman who lived in a village on Kei Kecil Island."</i>	Use "on" for islands. In English, we generally use the preposition on when referring to living or being located on an island.
Page 4	<i>"Everyday, she planted something in her farm."</i>	<i>"Every day, she planted something on her farm."</i>	<i>"Every day, she planted something in her farm."</i>	"Everyday" (adjective) ≠ "every day" (adverb). Also, we say "on a farm."

Page	Original Translation	ChatGPT -4-Turbo free version Correction Translation	Gemini Advanced version. by Google AI Correction Translation	Reasons
Page 6	"People living in her neighborhood were also worked as farmers."	"People living in her neighborhood also worked as farmers."	"People living in her neighborhood also worked as farmers."	"Were" is unnecessary here.
Page 12	"...children who would go sailling."	"...children who would go sailing."	"...children who would go sailing."	"sailing" (one "l").
Page 24	"Sadly, her portion was the smallest compare to the others..."	"Sadly, her portion was the smallest compared to the others..."	"Sadly, her portion was the smallest compared to the others..."	"Compared" is the correct past participle.
Page 28	"The (granny) old woman felt unfair about their distribution."	"The old woman felt the distribution was unfair."	"The (granny) old woman felt unfair about the distribution."	Chatgpt Version: Reword for natural phrasing. Gemini Advanced: The original sentence used "their distribution," which implies that the distribution belonged to "their" (a plural pronoun), but the sentence is talking about "the" distribution, a specific one that's being discussed. "The" is the correct article to use here.



Source: Author

Figure 1.1 The content of the *Batu Penyul* folktale

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the English translation of *Batu Penyu*, originally written by Ida Ohoiwutun and translated by Muhamad Akib Tatroman and Evi Olivia Kumbangsila, revealed a total of 20 grammatical errors. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and the adapted G1–G10 error-coding framework from Hawkins and Norton (2020), the study categorized these errors into ten types. The most frequent errors were G3: Grammar (5 errors), G1: Complex word or phrase (4 errors), and G7: Semantic errors (3 errors). These findings suggest that while the core narrative was preserved, the translation would have benefited from careful linguistic refinement, particularly to ensure readability and accuracy for its young target audience. Prepositional errors such as “at the village” instead of “in the village” and repeated misspellings like “sailling” instead of “sailing” indicated a pattern of carelessness and insufficient editing. This supports the findings of Setyaningrum and Fatmawaty (2020) that notes misformation and prepositional errors are generally made by EFL learners who are influenced by L1. However, unlike in their study, which considered student-produced translations, the present study examines a professionally-published folktale, raising a disturbing issue that some materials meant to be consumed by the public are not grammatically sound. Such errors appearing in a children's story would pose questions of what the effects on young readers' language learning and literacy learning would be in the long run.

Moreover, the research wound G2 and G4 as cultural and idiomatic mistranslations which may distort the meaning of the story. As Babazade (2024) pointed out, cultural preservation in translation is very important, especially in folktales since culture is heavily embedded in the narrative and affects its emotional and moral impact. Failing to observe cultural nuances or inability to idiomatically localize these expressions in *Batu Penyu* greatly diminishes its cultural and educational value. This study agrees with Alharbi (2021) in that orthographic errors highlighted in English textbooks were considered to undermine learner trust. This study underscores that literary translations, particularly those meant for children, cannot afford orthographic and semantic blunders, even more so if the audience is impressionable children. A main feature of this study is the validation of errors through AI (ChatGPT-4 Turbo and Gemini Advanced) which increased objectivity and accuracy of the analysis. This supports Anh (2024) who argued that AI enabled platforms aid language learners by providing diverse and critical responses. But your paper goes further by utilizing AI beyond the scope of learning and employing it for quality control in translation evaluation. In conclusion, while previous research has primarily focused on learner-generated texts or academic translations, this study addresses a significant gap by evaluating a professionally translated folktale intended for children. It emphasizes the importance of grammatical accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and stylistic appropriateness in children's literature. The findings advocate for more rigorous editing practices and specialized training for translators working in this genre. By integrating AI-assisted analysis and focusing on real-world educational texts, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of translation studies and highlights the need for higher standards in translating culturally significant stories for young audiences.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the grammatical errors in the English translation of the *Maluku* folktale *Batu Penyu*, to see how they might influence the meaning and clarity of the tale. Even though the message was well handled, the presence of these mistakes showed that additional editing is important because the text is meant for kids. Incorrectly using prepositions, making spelling errors and using too difficult words in a story can make the lesson less clear for

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learners. To ensure the analysis was both correct and understood by all cultures, this study relied on AI and also checked the work manually. The results indicate that including both technology and human input is important for translating children's literature. Further research is suggested to see how blunders in grammar and culture during translation of folktales could influence young learners' progress in language development.

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