

Grammatical Errors in Students' Abstract Translation

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Abstract—Translation plays an important role in social life. Since translation is not an easy work, the translators should carry out a good amount of knowledge in linguistics, cultural aspect, and other skill related to human life. Occasionally, a faulty in translation causes a violation in the result and is unacceptable in the target text. The aim of this research is to identify the grammatical problems in students' abstract translation in IAIN Metro. The data was taken from 20 abstract translations of students' undergraduate theses in IAIN Metro. Observation, documentation, and note taking are the techniques in collecting the data. This research used human instrument to analyze the data. To analyze the data, the researcher applied Miles and Huberman Model that consists of data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion. The result shows that most students make some grammatical errors in translating abstract. The researcher found 182 errors in total from 5 categories that are verb, number, s-v agreement, parallelism, and unnatural structure.

Keywords—translation, error analysis, grammatical error, abstract

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation activity has become people's urgent need particularly when they are involved in bilingual communication. Thus, having ability in translation is a necessity for students in learning language, primarily foreign language. The ability in translation is very useful to help students in understanding those materials such as article, journal, essay or even textbook. Moreover, it can also be an asset for students to study linguistic feature and the cultural aspect of language.

However, translation is not an easy work and is a combination of art and skill [1]. It needs a comprehension about the structure of both source and target language indeed to make a good translation result. A good translation should also convey meaning as perhaps the readers could understand or interpret the message. One of the language aspects required in a good and readable translation is grammar.

Grammar is one of the most important aspects in translation. The use of grammar influences the meaning or message of the translated text since to produce the equivalent message is basic aim of translation activity. Grammar mistakes which appear in translation will deliver the different messages that are unacceptable and incomprehensible to the readership. Moreover, it will be great problem if the errors occur in academic writing.

The academic culture of pursuing a degree in Indonesia requires a thing to show the credential fulfillment and knowledge application at the end of the year of the study. It is applied to all degrees of the university levels whether for the undergraduate and graduate students. This matter is under the discussion of the academic writing. It is designed for anyone who is studying in colleges or universities or making writing assignments for a course. For the bachelor's degree students, writing an undergraduate thesis is one of the fulfillments. An undergraduate thesis consists of several parts, in which one of them is the abstract.

Abstract or abstraction is a greatly important part of undergraduate thesis, because it can describe the content of the writing generally. Even, many undergraduate thesis readers only read the writing from its abstract. Although translating abstract has run for about several years in IAIN Metro, some common grammatical errors are still found. If the errors can not be decreased, it will cause not good, especially for the writer and all students who certainly will write academic paper.

Thus, studying students' grammatical errors is very effective way in showing students' weakness in translation. Abassi and Karimnia in [2], state that analysis of errors in students' translation revealed significant shortfalls in English grammar. It is also a way to know some problems that the students have and to make the teacher know what he/she still needs to teach in order to improve students' skill particularly in translation. In addition, the teacher could understand students' errors and could build the educational techniques and methods to improve the level of their students and to help students avoid most of the interference errors [3].

Several studies have been carried out to identify errors in producing English language. Lecturer of Applied Linguistic in King Khalid University, Al-Badawi in [4] conducted a research towards his students in learning English to identify common phonetic, morphological, and syntactic errors. The finding revealed that the errors made by the students are substitution of the consonants /f/ for /v/ and /p/ for /b/ and the vowels /ə/ for /ɔ/, /ə/ for /ʊ/ and /ɛ/ for /i/; failure to use the plural and third-person singular (-s/es), the comparative (-er), and the progressive (-ing); and lack of subject-verb agreement, erroneous use of prepositions, and erroneous addition and deletion of certain auxiliaries.

Usha and Kader in [5], studied morphological and syntactical errors made by secondary school students of Kerala. The result study revealed several major types of

syntactic errors that are concord in auxiliaries, SVO pattern, articles, prepositions and tenses and affixation and compound related errors, failure to use the marker (-er) and conversion related errors are major types of morphological error.

Based on the researcher observation, it is true that the students make errors in their translation. In general, most of errors are related to the lexical adjustment, grammar, and cultural terms. The condition becomes worst because the students have lack of motivation in practicing translation. The existence of different grammar rules in English and Bahasa Indonesia is possibly the reason why students often do the errors. For instance, English has concept of tenses for verb and subject verb agreement, while grammar in Bahasa Indonesia does not have any.

Regarding to the existing problem of grammatical aspect and the need of analysis on the students' translating work, the researcher analyzed the grammatical errors on the abstract translation of students' undergraduate theses of English Department at IAIN Metro.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the literature review. Section III describes the proposed research method. Section IV describes the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally, Section VI concludes this work.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the literature review.

A. Translation

The term translation generally defines as the process of changing form of the original language (the source language or SL) into a different language (the target language or TL). This type accords with inter-lingual translation or translation proper which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language [6]. Another definition is proposed by Nida and Taber in [7] that translating consists of reproducing the closest natural equivalence of a source language in the receptor language, both in term of meaning and in term of style.

J.C. Catford explains that translation is the change of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Catford: 1978: 20). The term textual material underlines the fact that it is not the entirety of SL text which is translated, that is, replaced by TL equivalents. For example, if we translate the Indonesian text "*Kemana kau pergi?*" into English as "*Where are you going?*", there is replacement of SL (Indonesia) grammar and lexis by equivalent TL (English) grammar and lexis.

In translating the text, several steps are needed to gain good translation result. Budianto in [8] divides translation process in three steps:

- a. Understanding the meaning or message of SL text, through analyzing its words, phrases, and sentence structures or grammar used on the sentences;
- b. Finding out the equivalent meanings of the text to transfer the analyzed messages in SL into the TL message.
- c. Reconstructing the equivalent meanings of SL to TL with equivalent forms or sentence patterns.

In translating, the first step is to study the whole text to get the general idea or to understand the message of the text, after obtaining a picture of the message, translator analyses it into its parts meaning to know how the message is described in the SL sentences; how those sentences related to another; what kinds of dictions/words are used to bring message. After that, translator finds out their equivalent to target language and arranges them in the most natural patterns in TL. Furthermore, the cultural aspects of SL must be replaced with the ones in TL. In other words, the analysis will move in the opposite direction from the fragments to the whole, from the simpler to the more complex. The smallest unit of the equivalent should be determined first, and then combine them into longer unit, next come to the whole text.

The next step is to reread the whole new text to evaluate equivalent result of the SL message to know whether the text in TL give the same effect to the reader who reads it as he reads the SL text or not. Additionally, to achieve a translation result sounds like original, translator must make lexical and grammatical adjustment to the TL.

B. Error Analysis

Errors reflect gaps in learners' knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what correct is [9]. It means that error is caused by lack of knowledge about the target language. Dulay, *et al.*, in [10], describes that errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm of nature language performance. Brown in [11] defines an error as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting language competence of the learner.

The study of learner's error is called by linguist as error analysis. Ellis and Barkhuizen in [12], note that error analysis consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing, and explaining learner errors. Furthermore, Brown in [11], adds that error analysis is the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviation of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learner. In short, these procedures cannot be separated to analyze the errors made by the learners. It is carried out to get information on common difficulties faced by learner which enables to help teachers to correct the students' errors and improves the strategies of their teaching method.

Dulay, *et al.*, in [10] propose four descriptive classifications to analyze errors. They are as follows:

1. Error in linguistic taxonomy

Linguistic taxonomy classifies errors according to either or both the language components and the linguistic constituent the error affects. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantic and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and discourse (style). Constituent includes the elements that comprise each language component. For example, within syntax one may ask whether the error is in the main or subordinate clause, which constituent is affected, e.g. the

noun phrase, the auxiliary, the verb phrase, the preposition, the adverb, the adjective, and so forth.

2. Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Surface strategy taxonomy shows alteration in surface structure. The surface strategy elements of a language are altered in specific and systematic ways. The most general breakdown can be addition, omission, mis formation, and disordering.

a. Addition

Addition error is characterized by the presence of an item which is ungrammatically English. There are three types of addition error:

- 1) Double Marking. It occurs when there are two or more items with same feature in a sentence. For example: My father doesn't go to the office this morning, because he is sick (*doesn't* and *goes* are the same feature for simple present tense). The correct form of that sentence is: My father doesn't go to the office this morning, because he is sick.
- 2) Regularization. In English, there are exceptions to the rule for some members of class. For examples, the verb *eats*, the past form is not *eated*, but *ate*; the noun *sheep*, the plural form is *sheep*, not *sheeps*. Whenever learners apply the rules used to produce the regular ones to those that irregular, it results in error of regularization.
- 3) Simple addition. It is the use of an item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance, and they are not *double marking* or *regularization error*.

b. Omission

Omission errors are the opponent of additions. It is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear correctly according to the rules of grammar. It is found in a greater variety of morphemes. This error, the learner may omit noun and verb inflections (the *-s* in plural form of birds, *-ed* in looked, the *-ing* in cooking, etc.). For example:

- a) I bought three *doll* for my daughter two days ago. (omission *-s* for plural form – dolls)
- b) I *study* Math last night. (omission *-ed* for inflectional verb – studied).

c. Mis formation

Mis formation is characterized using either morpheme or structure in the wrong form. It occurs when the learner supplies incorrect item in well-formed utterance. Similar with addition, misformation also has some subtypes; *regularization errors*, *archi-forms*, *alternating forms*.

Regularization errors are those in which a regular marker is used in place of an irregular one, as in *runned* for *ran* or *gooses* for *geese*. Another subtype is archi-form, it happened when learners select one member of a class of forms to represent others in the class. For example, a learner temporarily selects just one of the English demonstratives adjectives *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* to do the work for several of them (*that dog*, *that dogs*). The last subtypes are alternating form, it defines as fairly free alternation of various members of a class with each other, in case of

pronoun, the learners may use masculine for feminine (or vice versa), as in *he* for *she*.

d. Misordering

Incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance is characteristic of misordering. For example, the learner may say "*I don't know where Rudy is*". In this sentence there is an incorrect placement. The correct sentence is "*I don't know where Rudy is*".

3. Comparative Taxonomy

Comparative taxonomy classifies the errors based on comparisons between the second language learners' errors and errors reported by learners acquiring English as a first language. Types of comparative taxonomy are developmental errors, interlingual errors, ambiguous errors, and other errors.

4. Communicative Effect Taxonomy

Communicative effect taxonomy deals with errors from the perspective of the listener or reader. It is related to errors that come from misunderstanding of the listener or the reader to what the speaker says, or the writer writes. Global error and local error are included in this taxonomy.

C. Source of Error

Errors in learning target language are occurred by many causes. By identifying the cause of errors, we can figure out why the errors happened, and more understand of how the process of target language acquisition. Brown's theory exposed three main sources of errors; they are interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, and context of learning.

1. Interlingual Transfer

Interlingual defined as errors which is the result of language transfer or translation that caused by the students' first language. Interlingual transfer can be called mother tongue interference [13]. It has a great deal in learning target language directly.

Intralingual errors are similar in structure to an equivalent phrase or sentence in the learners' native language [10]. It also be said that this error occurs because the learners' native language does not have the same rules of the target language has, but the learner applies the rules of their native language into target language.

2. Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual transfer errors result from the faulty or partial learning. It occurs as a result of learner's attempt to build up concepts about the target language from the limited experience with it.

3. Context of learning

Context of learning means that the social situation or the school that takes place in learning process can lead to the source of error [13]. In the classroom context for example, the teacher or the book can lead the learner to make an error in accepting the concepts.

Another source of errors is mentioned by Norrish quoted [14]. He classifies causes of error into three types that are:

a. Carelessness

Carelessness is so-called as lack of motivation. The materials, strategies and method of teaching which is not suitable with the learners' interest may cause carelessness in learning, especially language learning. It is not totally students' fault.

b. First Language Interference

This source of error is also known as first language interference. Learning a language either mother tongue or foreign language is a habitual formation, because when someone is going to learn new habits the old one will interfere the new ones.

c. Translation

Translation is one of the sources of error. This happens because a student translates his first language sentence or idiomatic expression into the target language word by word

III. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell in [15] qualitative research is for exploring and understanding the meaning individual or group ascribed to social or human problem. In conducting this research, the researcher describes the types of grammatical error on morphology and syntax rules based on Linguistic Category Taxonomy. The data was taken from 20 students' abstract translation of IAIN Metro. The data will be gained through several instruments that are observation and documentation and note taking technique. To analyze the data, the researcher used interactive model by Miles and Huberman in [16], which consists of four steps that are data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis showed that there are five categories of errors in total included in morphology and syntax errors. The researcher found two kinds of morphological error that are verb and number. Other three kinds of error are included in syntactical errors that are Subject Verb Agreement, Parallelism, and Unnatural Structure. The following table illustrated the errors which were found in students' abstract translation.

TABLE I. CATEGORIES OF ERROR FOUND IN STUDENTS' ABSTRACT TRANSLATION

No	Category of Error		Number
1	Morphology	Verb	55
		Number	10
2	Syntax	S-V Agreement	12
		Parallelism	37
		Unnatural Structure	68
Total			182

The Table I above shows some categories of errors generally made by the students in translating abstract. The

highest number of errors made by the students in translating abstract is syntax category that is unnatural structure with 68 errors in total. Error in using verb comes after unnatural structure with 55 errors made by 20 students in translating abstract. Parallelism errors are found with 37 error in total and error in using number both singular and plural form is the lowest error after S-V agreement with 10 numbers and 5.5 percent.

The following presents the discussion from aforementioned results.

A. Morphological Error

The researcher found 65 morphological errors made by the students in translating abstract of under graduated theses in IAIN Metro. These errors can be classified into /two kinds of morphological errors that are verb and number. Each category will be elaborated in following explanation.

1) Verb: The researcher found 55 errors in total showing the error of verb. In this case, the categorization of verb error was in misemployed active-passive voice verb, misuse of preposition in phrasal verb, omitting suffix -ing after preposition, and omitting suffix s/es in third singular person. The following is the data and explanation of verb error found in students' abstract translation.

Data 1. Data of Error in using Verb

ST: *Setiap siklus terdiri dari perencanaan, tindakan, pengamatan, dan refleksi.*

TT: **Each cycle *consist of** planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The data above contain a grammatical error in the use of verb. The subject of the sentence refers to singular but the writer used plural verb-*consist of*. Bahasa Indonesia does not have any form in the use of singular or plural verb. It is probably making the students to carry out some errors. This is kind of interlingual transfer that the students are influenced by their native language.

Data 2. Data of Error in using Verb

ST: *Grice merupakan orang yang pertama kali mempelajari persoalan-persoalan mengenai ...*

TT: Grice is the first who *study cases about speaker ...

The data show an error in using verb that is plural verb after pronoun *who*. The pronoun *who*, *that*, and *which* become singular or plural according to the noun directly in front of them, while the data have a singular subject which is required singular verb. The cause is probably native language interference that Bahasa Indonesia does not have the same rules as the target language.

2) Number: There were 10 errors in total that the researcher found in the students' abstract translation. Error in number often occurs in English language since the pattern of number does not exist in Bahasa Indonesia. The researcher gives the data of number error in students' abstract translations.

Data 3. Data of Error in using Number

ST: Karena **empat strategi** menjadi fenomena...

TT: Because the four ***strategy** become phenomena...

The data above show error in the use of number in English. Bahasa Indonesia does not have form in the use of plural and singular in number, but English language does. In the data above, the writer translates “*empat strategi*” to “four strategy” which is ungrammatical in English, especially in written form. It is categorized as error in number. Suffix “s/es” should be added in the word “strategy” to adjust target language grammatical form.

Data 4. Data of Error in using Number

ST:... *gerund sebagai subjek, gerund sebagai objek, sebagai pelengkap, gerund setelah kata kerja tertentu...*

TT:...gerund as a subject, an object, **a complements**, after certain verb...

The data show an error in using suffix “s” in singular noun. The source text required singular noun “*pelengkap*” but the students translate it into plural “complements” which is ungrammatically English.

B. Syntactical Error

The researcher found 117 syntactical errors made by the students in translating abstract of under graduated theses in IAIN Metro. These errors can be classified into three kinds of syntactical errors that are S-V agreement, Parallelism, and Unnatural Structure. Each category will be elaborated in following explanation.

3) S-V Agreement: Agreement means the state of having same number, gender, or person. The basic rule in Subject-Verb Agreement is that the singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb. There are 12 errors showing S-V agreement in students’ abstract translation. The following explanation will show kinds of S-V agreement error in students’ abstract translation.

Data 5. Data of Error in S-V Agreement

ST: **penulis mencoba** untuk menggunakan *Team Based Learning*

TT: **the writer *try** to use Team Based Learning

The data show error in Subject Verb agreement in the target language. The word “the writer” indicates third singular person that requires a singular verb, but the writer omits suffix “es” in translating to target language that is the characteristic of singular verb in English. Since English has special form in combining subject and verb, the above example is kinds of error.

4) Parallelism: Parallelism can be understood as a balance of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses. In English language, items in a series should be parallel in that they must have the same grammatical forms. There are 37 errors found in students’ abstract translation. Here is the data of parallelism error:

Data 6. Data of Error in Parallelism

ST: *siswa kurang termotivasi dan kurang antusias dalam belajar kalimat sederhana*

TT: students have less **motivation** and ***enthusiastic** in learning simple sentence

A sentence should arrange parallel structure, especially in word class category. The data shows parallelism error that occurs in phrase “*motivation and enthusiastic*” which has different word class, that is noun for “motivation” and adjective for “enthusiastic”. It indicates error in the sentence arrangement.

Data 7. Data of Error in Parallelism

ST: *Hal itu berarti bahwa ada hubungan yang positif dan signifikan...*

TT: It **means** that there **was** a positive and significant...

The data show the parallelism error of verb. The first clause uses “means” which indicates present tense verb but the second uses simple past tense verb “was”.

5) Unnatural Structure: Unnatural structure is the case when the structure is influenced by structure of native language. There are 68 errors in total showing unnatural structure. Those errors mostly influenced by interference. Here are the data of unnatural structure:

Data 8. Data of Unnatural Structure

ST: *Banyak kemampuan yang harus kita kuasai seperti menyimak, berbicara, membaca dan menulis*

TT: Many skills that have to be mastered such as listening, speaking, reading and writing

The data show that the writer uses “that” to translate “yang” in English and omits verb that is the main component in a sentence. It is probably caused by interference of the source or native language of the writer which does not have rule of verb form.

Data 9. Data of Unnatural Structure

ST: *Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester tiga jurusan pendidikan bahasa inggris mempunyai masalah dua kategori*

TT: The result of this research the third semester of the English department of the STAIN Jurai Siwo Metro have two problems.

The data above sound unnatural since English sentence has the rules in the use of verb. The sentence sound unnatural because the main subject is unclear, and it needs a conjunction that is omitted. The best translation should be “The result of this research is that the third semester of the English department of the STAIN Jurai Siwo Metro has two problems”.

V. CONCLUSION

The result based on the analysis of 20 samples of abstract translation carried out by the undergraduate students in IAIN Metro revealed that grammatical problems

common in their translation could be summed up in five categories. Those are Verb, Number, S-V Agreement, Parallelism, and Unnatural Structure included in Morphological and Syntactical Structure. Unnatural Structure take the highest number of errors proceed from interference of native or source language of the students.

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