

# AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON STUDENTS' TRANSLATION FROM INDONESIAN INTO ENGLISH MADE BY THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA N 1 SEPUTIH RAMAN

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan tipe kesalahan tata bahasa yang dibuat oleh siswa saat menerjemahkan teks dari bahasa Indonesia ke dalam bahasa Inggris dan penyebab siswa membuat kesalahan tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskripsi. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas 11 IPA 5 SMA N 1 Seputih Raman. Dalam penelitian ini tugas penerjemahan digunakan untuk memperoleh data kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa yang kemudian diklasifikasikan dan dianalisis berdasarkan *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* dan *Communicative Effect Taxonomy* dan kuesioner digunakan untuk memperoleh data tentang penyebab dari kesalahan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa membuat semua tipe kesalahan berdasarkan aspek *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* dan *Communicative Effect Taxonomy*. Penyebab siswa melakukan kesalahan tersebut adalah pengaruh bahasa ibu, pengaruh bahasa target, dan metode pembelajaran. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan tata bahasa Inggris yang dimiliki siswa masih rendah.

**Abstract:** This research was aimed at finding out types of grammatical errors made by students when they translated Indonesian text into English and the possible causes of those errors. The method applied in this study was a descriptive method. The subjects were 30 students of class XI Science 5 of SMA N 1 Seputih Raman. The translation task was used as the instrument to elicit the errors which were classified and analyzed based on *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* and *Communicative Effect Taxonomy*, and questionnaire was used to obtain the data of the causes of students' errors. The results revealed that the learners made all error types in terms of surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. The causes of those errors were mother tongue interference, intralingual transfer, and teaching method. This suggests that the students' capability of English grammar was still low.

**Keywords:** *error analysis, grammatical error, communicative effect taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, translation.*

## INTRODUCTION

As one of the subjects in schools, English has an important role because it is a foreign language learned formally. Considering that English is a foreign language in Indonesia, it is very possible for students to make errors in language system when they are learning English skills and components and this case is difficult enough to avoid. In language learning process, error can be defined as the signal that indicates an actual learning process taking place and that the learner has not yet mastered or shown a well-structured competence in the target language (Hendrickson, 1979). The errors can happen in some cases, especially when learners use English grammar.

Grammar is a system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence, it plays an important role to learn as it tells us how to construct a sentence which covers word order, verb or noun system, modifiers, phrases, clauses, etc (Brown, 2000: 347-348). According to the article from Oxford Royale Academy (2014), English grammar is notoriously problematic for EFL learners; its difficulty leads to a great many common mistakes, which even native speakers frequently fall foul of. The difficulty in mastering English grammar leads students to make some grammatical errors. According to Norrish (1983), grammatical error is a term used in prescriptive grammar to describe an instance of faulty, unconventional, or controversial usage, such as a misplaced modifier or an inappropriate verb tense.

In this study, the writer conducted an error analysis and used translation activity from Indonesia into English as a tool to find out the grammatical errors which regularly made by students. Lin (2008) states that translation from L1 to L2 offers learners opportunities to apply what they have learned before- for example, vocabulary and sentence structure- into practical use.

By doing this research, it is expected that the result of this research can have significant uses theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the result of the research is expected that it can be used as an information to enrich the previous research. While, practically, it can be an input for English teachers to minimize students' errors and as a basic consideration for remedial treatment and teaching. Furthermore, for the students, the errors in their translation can be a feedback to improve their knowledge in translating text and to minimize their weaknesses in translation especially in the sense of grammar.

## METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative method. In this study, the researcher described the errors by using a simple calculation in form of percentage, not really in statistical calculation. Then, the researcher made the description of the sample errors and gave the analysis. In this study, the researcher analyzed and categorized the errors based on *surface strategy taxonomy* and *communicative effect taxonomy*. This research was conducted to the second grade students of SMA N 1 Seputih Raman in academic year 2018/2019. The researcher took class XI Science 5 as the subjects with the total 30 students.

In conducting this research, the writer applied some procedures, as follows; 1) determining the subject of the research, 2) conducting translation task, 3) identifying students' errors, 4) classifying the errors, 5) giving questionnaires, 6) analyzing the data, and 7) reporting the research findings.

In this research, the translation task was used as the instrument to elicit the data of students' errors. Explanation text was the topic of the task, it was about 'Flood'. It consists of 3 paragraphs, 135 words, and 9 sentences. The students were provided times to finish the task within 90 minutes. To get the data of the possible causes of errors, the researcher conducted questionnaires. The questionnaires used here belonged to *close-ended* and *open-ended* questionnaire.

In analyzing the data of students' errors, the researcher followed some steps, as follows; 1) identifying the errors, 2) classifying the errors, 3) calculating the errors, 4) tabulating the errors, and 5) making the conclusions. The data from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, data gathered through the close-end questionnaire were subjected to frequency counts. In other words, the subjects' answers for each individual question were added together to find out the highest frequency occurrence (i.e. the total number students' answers of a particular indicator). The students' answers to the questions, which were quantified, were then presented in percentage forms. This analysis was presented in tabular form. It was used to show the level of the influence of each indicator for students in committing the errors. After that, the researcher interpreted the results of the close-ended questionnaire through qualitative analysis. In making the interpretation, the researcher analyzed the data by matching it to students' answers in open-end questionnaire and also supporting theories, so, it was used to strengthen the analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

As a result of the research, this study elaborated the findings as the relevant data of the research as the following.

#### **Types of Error Found in Learners' Translation Work**

Briefly, the learners committed errors in their translation in forms of addition, omission, misformation, and misordering which were categorized in terms of surface strategy taxonomy. Similarly, they made errors in forms of global and local errors based on communicative effect taxonomy. In most cases, the frequency of each error type made by learners in their translation tends to be different.

#### **Frequencies of Learners' Grammatical Errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

The frequency of each error type classified in this taxonomy can be seen in the table below.

**Table 1. Frequencies of learners' grammatical errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

| Elements of Error            | Types of Error |              |              |             | Total of Errors | Percentages |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                              | OM             | AD           | MF           | MO          |                 |             |
| Nouns                        | 10             | 10           | 25           | 8           | 53              | 9.8%        |
| Verbs                        | 50             | 27           | 151          | 1           | 229             | 42.5%       |
| Adverbs                      | 2              | 15           | 14           | 3           | 34              | 6.4%        |
| Adjectives                   | 6              | 1            | 6            | 12          | 25              | 4.6%        |
| Conjunction                  | 10             | 6            | 11           | -           | 27              | 5%          |
| Preposition                  | 5              | 20           | 20           | -           | 45              | 8.3%        |
| Articles                     | 65             | 9            | 32           | -           | 106             | 19.7%       |
| Pronoun                      | 5              |              | 15           | -           | 20              | 3.7%        |
| <b>Total of each element</b> | <b>153</b>     | <b>88</b>    | <b>274</b>   | <b>24</b>   | <b>539</b>      |             |
| <b>Percentages</b>           | <b>28.4%</b>   | <b>16.4%</b> | <b>50.8%</b> | <b>4.4%</b> | <b>100%</b>     |             |

Table 1 above clearly shows that the learners, in terms of surface strategy taxonomy, the most persistent error type that prominently emerges in the learners' translation is misformation. It is then followed by omission and addition. Certainly, the least frequent error type that appears in their translation is misordering. Besides, the errors are found in all areas of part of speech. The table shows that the students mostly made error in verbs areas, while the least errors committed by the students are in the use of pronoun.

### **Frequencies of Learners' Grammatical Errors based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy**

To take a case in point concerned with the frequency of each error type are classified in this taxonomy, Table 2 below presents the data.

**Table 2. Frequencies of learners' grammatical errors based on Communicative Effect Taxonomies**

| Elements of Grammar          | Types of Error |              | Total of Errors | Percentages |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                              | LE             | GE           |                 |             |
| Nouns                        | 12             | 10           | 22              | 4.7%        |
| Verbs                        | 110            | 97           | 207             | 45%         |
| Adverbs                      | 20             | 25           | 45              | 9.7%        |
| Adjectives                   | 7              | 5            | 12              | 2.6%        |
| Conjunctions                 | -              | 35           | 35              | 7.6%        |
| Prepositions                 | 15             | 5            | 20              | 4.4%        |
| Articles                     | 116            | -            | 116             | 25.3%       |
| Pronoun                      | -              | 3            | 3               | 0.7%        |
| <b>Total of each element</b> | <b>280</b>     | <b>180</b>   | <b>460</b>      |             |
| <b>Percentages</b>           | <b>60.8%</b>   | <b>39.2%</b> | <b>100%</b>     |             |

Table 2 shows that in terms of communicative effect taxonomy, the more dominant error type appears in the learners' translation is the local error. Meanwhile, the least error made by them is global error. Additionally, the errors are found almost in all part of speech. The table above shows that the students mostly made error in verbs areas, while the least errors committed by the students are in the use of pronoun.

### Results of the Questionnaire related to the Causes of Errors

In this study, there were three possible causes the writer focused on as the conceptual domains to analyse the causes of students' errors, they were mother tongue interference, intralingual transfer, and teaching method. In this research, the researcher tried to prove those causes by conducting questionnaires to the students. After the questionnaires had been attained, the results of the questionnaire are presented in the forms of percentages and category that can be seen in the table below.

**Table 3. Percentages of each cause of errors.**

| INDICATORS                  | PERCENTAGES | CATEGORY |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Mother tongue Interferences | 69.2 %      | High     |
| Intralingual Transfer       | 72 %        | High     |
| Teaching Method             | 64,9 %      | High     |

It can be observed in Table 3, the highest percentage comes from intralingual transfer, then it is followed by mother tongue interference, and the least percentage is from teaching method. If we concern with the range of fulfillment score stated by Sudjiono (2005), the range of percentage in level 61%-80% is categorized as high. So, according to Table 3, we can conclude that the three percentages of those indicators are included as high category. This means that those three indicators seriously influenced students in committing errors on their translation.

### Discussion

Specifically, this section discussed the findings of this recent study. It reveals how the learners made errors in regard with elements of grammar and how their errors could be classified into certain types of errors belonged to either or both surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. To understand how those points could be answered, the discussion below extends the case.

#### Learners' Grammatical Errors in Terms of Surface Strategy Taxonomy

The findings of this present study evidently reveal that the learners made errors in their translation in all forms of surface strategy taxonomy, i.e. omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. This finding apparently supports some previous related studies, such as a study conducted by Satrio (2016) related to grammatical error analysis on students translation from Indonesian into English. His study indicated that the learners in their translation, committed errors in all forms of surface strategy taxonomy.

#### Misformations

Table 1 (See page 4), it can be clearly observed, misformation is in the first rank. It means that the learners mostly committed misformation in their translation. Dulay, et al (1982) explained that misformation is indicated by the use of the wrong form of a morpheme. Nonetheless, concerning the parts of speech in the use of English sentences, the learners mostly committed misformation dealing

with the use of verbs. They often wrongly used inappropriate forms of verbs for instance when the subjects in the sentences are singular and the errors that occurred when the subject is followed by any modal. The following is one of the learners' erroneous sentences as an example to show the case:

*TL: The water will overflowing and causing flooding.*

*SL: Air tersebut akan meluap dan menyebabkan banjir*

The sentence above is principally incorrect since the verbs *overflowing and causing* are in wrong formation. Those should be *overflow and cause* (verb-1 form) because in English grammar rules the subject that is followed by any modal the following verb should be base form of verb. This shows that the cause of the learners made misformation was they did really not comprehend yet about the transformation of particular verbs caused by certain tense in a sentence or followed by any modal. The correct sentence is *The water will overflow and cause flooding*.

### **Omissions**

Theoretically, omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance or sentence. As could be seen in Table 1 (See page 4), this type of errors becomes the second highest percentage of errors. Students mostly made omission errors in regard with the use of articles in the sentences. The following example takes one from the learners erroneous sentences:

*TL: Flood is \_\_ disaster that very often happens.*

*SL: Banjir adalah sebuah bencana alam yang sering terjadi*

In the example above the student has failed to build correct noun group by omitting article. The appropriate article that should be added before the word *disaster* is 'a' since 'a' is used to complete noun that starts with a consonant sound. This fact reveals that the factor the learners committed omission errors was most of them ignored the use of articles in constructing English sentences since they had not understood about the rule of using articles when they want to refer definite and indefinite thing or person. The sentence above should be *Flood is a disaster that very often happens*.

### **Additions**

Addition error is placed in the third rank of errors made by students as clearly shown in Table 1 (See page 4). Dulay et al (1982) state that addition error is characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed sentence. The most frequent aspect dealt with verbs addition. To be more concrete, here is one of the learners' erroneous sentences:

*TL: Floods is very often hit the city of Jakarta*

*SL: Banjir sering melanda kota Jakarta*

In sentence above, the learner added auxiliary verb *is* in the sentence which has a main verb *hit*. The auxiliary verb *is* should be omitted because it makes the sentence has double main verbs. It seems that the cause of the learners made addition errors was since they might not understand clearly about the use of auxiliary and main verb. Consequently, the incorrect sentences should be revised as *Floods really often hit Jakarta*.

### **Misorderings**

As could be seen in Table 1 (See page 4), it indicates that the learners infrequently committed misordering in their translation. Dulay, et al (1982) state that misordering is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in a utterance. The learners made misordering errors when they translated Indonesian sentences into English especially when they used nouns, adjectives, adverbs in a sentence or phrase. To be clear about misordering that the learners made, the following example shows the case:

*TL: Then, the water such flowing the place lower*

*SL: Kemudian, air tersebut mengalir ke tempat yang lebih rendah*

From the sentence above, it shows that students made various errors, the sentence above contains some kinds of errors, but in this case the researcher only focuses on describing misordering errors made by the learner. In the sentence, the noun *place lower* belongs to compound noun. Compound noun is made up of two or more words. That compound noun consists of *place* as the noun and *lower* as the adjective which are wrong form of order. The adjective must be first as modifier then accompanied by the noun. This clearly shows that the learner had not understood how to order several words properly to become a correct sentence, it could be inferred that the most significant cause of this case is the learners are still seriously influenced by the rules of their native language, *i.e.* Indonesian. The sentence should be revised as *Then, the water flows to the lower place*.

### **Learners' Errors in Terms of Communicative Effect Taxonomy**

The finding of this research also reveals that the learners in terms of communicative effect taxonomy, make errors in forms of global and local errors. In Table 2 (See page 4), it can be observed that the local errors are most committed by the learners than global errors. It turns out that this finding supports some preceding related studies, such as carried out by Utami (2015). She also found that the learners, in their translation, more frequently made local errors than global errors. To know further error types made by the learners in terms of communicative effect taxonomy, the discussion below shows the case.

#### **Local Errors**

Based on the Table 2 shown above, local error becomes the highest rate. It means that the learners mostly committed local errors in their translation. Dulay, et al (1982) state that local error tends to only influence a single element or constituent in a single sentence; hence it does, significantly, not affect the structure and the

meaning of whole sentence. The students mostly made local error in relation to the use of verbs and articles. They often made misformation of verbs and omission of articles in their translation. To convince this, the example below clarifies the case.

*SL: The water will overflows and causes flooding*

*TL: Air tersebut akan meluap dan menyebabkan banjir*

Seen clearly, in the sentence above the students failed to use appropriate verb form. The verbs *overflows* and *causes* should be changed into base form (V-1) of main verbs *overflow* and *cause* because modal verbs (will, can, should, must, could, etc) are always followed by a base form of main verb. Although the local error appear in the sentence, it does not affect the organization of the sentence. And it is still understandable. Consequently, the sentence above should be *The water will overflow and cause flooding*.

### **Global Errors**

Table 2 shows that the amount of global error is lower than the total of local errors students made in their translation. Dulay, et al (1982) point out that the existence of the global error is most able to affect overall sentence organization then significantly hinder communication. To know what the global error the learners made, the example below shows the case:

*TL: Process of natural flooding is usually caused by bad habits of humans who are not efficient about the environment.*

*SL: Proses terjadinya banjir secara non alamiah biasanya disebabkan oleh kebiasaan buruk manusia yang tidak peduli tentang lingkungan.*

In the example above, the students used improper clause, e.g *who are not efficient* to translate '*yang tidak peduli*' the clause should be *who do not care*. This kind of errors can affect the sentence structure and meaning, so it will hinder communication and make the readers misinterpret the sentence. Consequently, those sentences should be revised as *The process of natural flooding is usually caused by bad habits of humans who do not care about the environment*.

### **Causes of Students' Errors**

After getting the data of the questionnaires that had been answered by the students, it could be concluded that there were three possible causes of students' errors, they were intralingual transfer, interlingual transfer, and teaching method. Those causes of errors are further discussed in the following discussion.

#### **Intralingual transfer**

Based on the result of close-end questionnaire that can be seen in Table 3 (See page 5), intralingual transfer has the highest percentage which means that intralingual transfer seriously encouraged students in committing errors. This fact is proved by the data of students' answers in each statement in the close-end questionnaire that had been filled by students. From the results of students



answers, most of students agreed with statement “*Translating Indonesian text into English is not an easy work*”, it indicates that translating Indonesian text into English is not an easy work for them. This means they found any problems when they did that work. It is also clarified by students when they answered question in open-ended questionnaire, most of them said that they found any difficulties in applying English grammar rules because they less understood about it. This was clearly indicated by disagreement of students to the statement that states “*I have understood the grammatical rules in English as well*”, most of students disagreed with this statement. This result means the students absolutely lack of English grammar. This case becomes the possible cause why students made the errors.

### **Errors encouraged by mother tongue interference**

Mother tongue interference is considered as the second possible cause of students’ errors. The data of students’ answers in the questionnaires indicated that students committing errors were due to the influence of their first language (Bahasa Indonesia). This fact is proved by the result of the questionnaire which confirmed that in translating Indonesian text into English they applied word for word translation. Besides, the students agreed that Indonesian and English have similar pattern of sentences, this belief causes them do literal translation. The indicators of mother tongue interference also can be found in other statements. The results show that most of students agreed that when they translated Indonesian text into English, they followed the rules of Indonesian text. These justification led students to produce word for word translation. Therefore, the interference of word for word translation make them committed the errors in their translation, i.e. misformation of English word, addition of needles words in their sentence, and also wrong order of words. The appearance of these errors made their translation not understandable and even the meaning which is not appropriate with the source language. This finding deals with Shan-ling and Yan (2013) who found that students errors happened due to the negative transfer of mother tongue.

### **Errors encouraged by teaching method**

Additionally, the students’ errors are caused by teaching method. It is believed that there was a problem in teaching and learning English process in class science 5 which made students lack of English grammar. This is proved by the result of students answers in close-ended questionnaire. The students mostly disagreed with statement that states “*My English teacher often asks me to practice English in written form*”. It indicates that they less practice to use English in written form. Besides, a half of the total students disagreed that their English teacher makes them understand English grammar. Considering these cases, it can be assumed that there is a problem in teaching method so that it makes students have difficulties in understanding English grammar. Actually, students often made kinds of error when they constructed English sentences was due to less repeated practice. This is also strengthened by students’ answers in open-ended questionnaire when the students were asked “*how does your English teacher teach you grammar*”, some of them said that the English teacher just explained it, gave the examples but she did not ask them to practice it. So, it made them do not fully understand about English grammar.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings and discussion of the result, the four conclusions are drawn as follows:

- 1) In regard to types of grammatical errors, the chosen students of SMA N 1 Seputih Raman still committed all error types in their translation work: (1) In terms of Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the learners committed misformation errors, omission errors, addition errors, and errors in misordering, (2) Communicative effect taxonomy, the result showed that the learners made local errors and also global error.
- 2) In terms of Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the most persistent error type the learners committed was misformation. It was then followed by omission, addition, and misordering, as the least frequent error types the learners made in their translation. While, in terms of Communicative Effect Taxonomy, the result showed that the learners most committed local errors and the global error was the least. This means that local error is the most frequent error type, while the global error is the least frequent error type.
- 3) The possible causes of errors which students made in their translation were mother tongue interference, intralingual transfer, and teaching method. The students frequently made errors because of intralingual transfer which could be seen from the errors which occurred because of their lack knowledge of English grammar. The second cause of error was mother tongue interference which made students tend to transfer their native language (Indonesian) structure into the target language (English). The third cause of students error was ineffective teaching method which made students lack of English grammar.
- 4) As an addition, the researcher found another data since she analyzed the errors related to parts of speech. The results showed that most of chosen students at second grade of SMA N 1 Seputih Raman committed grammatical errors in using all parts of speech area the writer chosen among other things: nouns verbs, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, preposition, articles, and pronoun. And the results showed that the most error type frequently made by students was in the use of verbs, while the least error type committed by students was in the use of pronouns.

## SUGGESTIONS

Relating to the research finding previously presented, some suggestions are proposed as follows:

### **Suggestion for English Teachers**

With expectation the students area able to minimize or even prevent to make errors and improve their knowledge in English grammar, some suggestions are truly recommended as follows:

- 1) The English teachers should give clearer explanations about grammar rules in English, particularly, in the verb area, because based on the result of this research, error in the verb use is the most frequent error made by students in their translation because all of the students made errors in this area.
- 2) The English teachers should give the students exercises in applying grammar regularly until they comprehend the rules of grammar and not only explaining the theory of grammar.
- 3) After knowing the students' difficulties in using correct grammar, the teacher is expected to be able to solve the students' difficulties by providing appropriate teaching materials or methods.

### **Suggestions for Further Researchers**

- 1) This study focuses on two error taxonomies, e.g. surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. Furthermore, two other taxonomies i.e. linguistic category and comparative analysis taxonomy are fully recommended to identify and classify error.
- 2) Besides, the subjects of this research were the second grade students of senior high school, thus, student higher level or even university might be chosen as subjects for other researchers in investigating errors they made.
- 3) There are so many weaknesses the writer has in conducting this research, especially in constructing the questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaires need more revisions since the questionnaires have not yet fulfilled the criteria of good questionnaire. So, it is suggested for the further researcher to be more careful and concern with the validity in constructing questionnaire and it is better to adapt the questionnaire which made by any expert in order to get the validity of the data.

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