



ANALYZING GRAMMATICAL INTERFERENCE ON EFL STUDENTS' INDONESIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

Learning a foreign language is sometimes difficult since the target language has different elements and rules compared to the native language. When the students apply those elements and rules, it often leads to errors. In this case, when a student is learning a foreign language, the students' native language will have an impact on the production of the language being learned which is called language interference. This study aims at investigating the types of interference and which type of interference appears more in EFL students' Indonesian-English translation text. This study involved twenty students of the first grade in a senior high school in Cianjur. It is descriptive qualitative research with the data taken from students' translation text that were analyzed by using error analysis to point out and describe the interference. The findings show that all participants of this research made errors in their translation text. In this case, four types of error found in the text, those were omission, addition, misformation, and disordering. The differences in the structures between two languages and different proficiency levels of students in target language led the students committed different error types in four error categories. The result of the analysis also shows that there were 413 errors found in the students' translation text which consisted of 121 omissions (29,29%), 96 additions (22,27%), 156 misformation (38%), and 44 disordering errors (11%). From those frequencies, the most frequent error was misformation. Misformation indicates the use of an incorrect form of a certain linguistic in the target language utterance.

Keywords: Language Interference, Indonesian-English Translation, Translation Text, Error Analysis, Classification of Error

INTRODUCTION

Learning English becomes more and more important nowadays since English is now a *lingua franca* and it is one of the international languages used to communicate around the world. Most Indonesians use their local language like Sundanese and Javanese as their first language (L1) and Bahasa Indonesia as their second language (L2). Bahasa Indonesia is the national language used to communicate among different ethnic groups in Indonesia as an official language. It is also used in schools and offices. In this case, English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. Helmie (2014) stated that in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture has decided that English becomes a compulsory subject taught at junior high school level and senior high school level. Despite so many years of learning English, most Indonesian students still have not mastered it yet. At university level, for example, Maolida & Mustika (2018) and Maolida &

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Salsabila (2019a, 2019b) mentions that lack of proficiency and grammatical constraints are the reasons why EFL students struggling in composing English text.

One of the reasons of those struggles is different elements and rules between target language and native language than led to students making errors when using the language. When a student is learning a foreign language, the students' native language will have an impact on the production of the language being learned which is called language interference. A study from Hasby &Thayyib (2015) listed numerous examples of students' erroneous Indonesia-English translation such as 'they playing' (syntactical error), 'wanna rain' translated from '*mau turun hujan*' (lexical error), and other types of error. According to Safa (2018) language interference happens when the speakers or writers apply their native language knowledge and rules to the second language. Meanwhile Lekova (2010) mentions that language interference occurs when someone transfers language elements from the source to target language. In this case, more errors can occur resulting from more differences between source and target language. The effect of interference can be on various language aspects such as structure, word choice, pronunciation, spelling and others. There are two kinds of interference which are facilitating or positive transfer and intervening or negative transfer (Karim & Nasaji, 2013). The greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative effects will appear (Harlig & Sprouse, 2017).

Language Interference

Fernandez & Cairns (2017) stated that transferring language uses mental processes by involving meaning, structure and phonetic and physical processes by involving the use of speech organ to transfer meaning to the interlocutor. In this case, students' first language (L1) is often transferred to English as target language, in form of positive and negative transfer. The proper use of grammatical rules of the language results from positive transfer. This transfer, fortunately, leads students to understand and comprehend the meaning of the interaction that occurred. On the other hand, negative transfer happens when the misuse of rules arises in the production of the new language and it can brings serious impact on the language produced. Language Interference is affected by communication between two languages. From psycholinguistics point of view, interference is a negative transfer of language elements from the source to foreign language. Meanwhile, from linguistics point of view, interference is an interaction between structures and structural elements that appears to be linguistic deviance in language use. Interference is often closely related to bilingualism but bilingualism has different character. In bilingualism, both language systems exist together and are independent in the individual's mind. A good command of the source and target languages can be identified as no interference. In the case of subordinate bilingualism, the target language is not fully mastered to the degree the first language is. Here, first language dominates and gives impacts to the target language and leads to interference (Richards, 2015). In translating a text, by changing an original written text into a written text in a different verbal language (Munday, 2009), interference can frequently happen. It is because by translating, someone exchanges information (Owji, 2018), transfer knowledge and cultural equivalence (Fitria, 2018) between two different languages by transferring messages and meaning from source to target language in which the rules of source language potentially interfere with those of target language.

Positive transfer

Positive transfer happens when the two language system structures align well with each other to provide an ease of transition. Positive transfer can help students in developing second language skills. The mother tongue may facilitate the process of learning second language, when the mother tongue has similarities with the second language (Budiharto, 2019). The example of positive transfer is the use of words from two different languages that are related in spelling or meaning, such as:

Produk and Product.
Basket and Basketball.
Kontes and Contest.

Negative transfer

Negative transfer happens when two language systems do not match well in structure and meaning. It can lead to language complication and confusion in understanding another language. The more differences between the two languages, the more negative effects will appear (Harlig & Sprouse, 2017). It can occur when someone has not fully mastered the target language yet. When the students struggle in producing English utterance or text, they tend to use their previous knowledge from their first language. It can be said that negative transfer occurs due to the unequal aspects of the two languages.

Examples of negative transfer:

"I sing a song together my friend yesterday"

The sentence shows a language interference that is caused by the transfer of the Indonesian language structure "*Saya menyanyikan sebuah lagu bersama teman saya kemarin*". In English, it should be expressed as "I sang a song with my friend yesterday"

Classification of error

Classification of Error theory by Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982) divided language errors into four taxonomies: linguistics category, the surface structure taxonomy, the comparative taxonomy, and the communicative effect taxonomy. This research only uses the surface structure taxonomy errors which have four types of errors resulted from language interference. The surface structure taxonomy is used to explain the error phenomena. Rusmiati (2019) wrote that learners might neglect necessary items, add unnecessary items, make errors in forming the items, or disorder the items. Those four types of error are omission, addition, misformation, and disordering. The omission occurs when a certain linguistic item is omitted or missing from an utterance, addition occurs when a certain linguistic item is added and it is not acceptable in well-formed utterance, misformation occurs when an incorrect form of a certain linguistic is used in the target language and disordering occurs when a certain linguistic item is incorrectly arranged in the target language utterance.

There have been many studies focusing on error analysis of EFL students' grammatical interference in English writing. Puspita (2021) analyzed Polytechnique students' language interference in their English writing and found that morphological and syntactical errors were the most dominant grammatical interference. The similar result was reported in Septiana (2020), by taking university students as subjects of research, it was revealed that syntactical and morphological errors were identified from the students' English writing. More similar with this research, Sari et al (2017) analyzed grammatical interference of university students and revealed that the interference was caused by intra- and inter-lingual factors. Despite the abundant research on language interference resulted in grammatical errors, most of the research took university students as subjects and little is known about grammatical interference in EFL senior high school students' translation writing. With earlier identification of grammatical interference, it hopefully led to earlier efforts on solving the problems. With that objective, this research is aimed to analyze the kind of errors resulted from language interference in Indonesian-English translation text done by senior high school students. Furthermore, this research also investigates the frequent error that appears in students' translation text.

METHODS

This study used qualitative approach as proposed by Creswell (2013) which served the data descriptively. In this study, even though the researchers analyzed and quantified

the meaning and relation of certain words and concepts, the data were discussed descriptively. This study was conducted at a senior high school in Cianjur with twenty students in the first grade of a science program class. The participants were between 15-17 years old. They were chosen since one of the researchers was assigned to teach them in PLP (practicum) program and the translation task assigned to the students as a preliminary assessment of their English writing skill. The students' first language were Sundanese, with Indonesian was used for conversation in formal context. Meanwhile, English was mostly used only in English classroom setting. In conducting this research the researchers gave a simple descriptive text to be translated by the students. The researchers used the translation text as the instrument to gain the data. The data found then were analyzed, marked, and classified the interferences on error analysis sheet to identify the type of interference that appeared on students' translation text. They were classified according to their types and were categorized into four categories of errors using theory of (Dulay et al., 1982) and were calculated to find the most frequent error using Sugiyono (2012) formula as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = percentage

F = frequency of error made

N = number of samples which observed

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings based on the first research question, "What types of grammatical interference that found in Indonesian-English translation?" were answered by using Dulay et al's (1982) theory of surface structure taxonomy. In general, all of the participants of this research made errors on their translation text. In this case, there were four types of error that found in the text, which were omission, addition, misformation and disordering. The second research question "Which error that frequently appears in Indonesian-English translation?" were calculated by using Sugiyono's theory of calculating percentage. The result is presented in the table 1 below:

Table 1 Frequency of Students' Error

No	Types of Error	Frequency of errors	Percentage
1	Omission	121	29,29%
2	Addition	92	22,27%
3	Misformation	156	38%
4	Disordering	44	11%

It was found that almost all participants made several errors in each type. From twenty participants there were 413 errors in the forms of 121 omission (29,29%), 96 addition (22,27%), 156 misformation (38%), and 44 disordering errors (11%). From those frequencies, it was revealed that most frequent error was misformation. Misformation indicates the use of an incorrect form of a certain linguistic in the target language utterance (Maolida & Hidayat, 2021).

Based on the data analysis, the researchers found some findings on how Indonesian grammatical aspect interferes Indonesian-English translation. The differences in the structures between two languages (Harlig & Sprouse, 2017) and different

proficiency level of students on the target language (Ruminar, 2018) led the students to commit different error types in four error categories. The interference on students' text can be seen in several phrases that they translated, for examples:

1. The roar of the wafes
2. Cliffs high
3. Head water

Those phrases appear because the students follow their first language rules instead of the target language rules. There was incapability to accomplish, recognize and comprehend the foreign language rules and its restriction and also less mastery of vocabulary and grammar. The students faced several problems in target language acquisition and it was not easy for them to learn because of the differences. When the students tried to translate the text and faced some difficulties, they tend to apply their first language rules or just did improvisation. Irmalia (2016) stated that the interference errors were caused by the students having too little practice to improve their English. Besides, the teachers did not provide the students with a good English environment which could make them more familiar with English. These weaknesses should be great concerns for the involved authorities like teachers and parents to consider some actions to solve the problem.

The data will be further discussed by explaining the four error categories that found on students' translation text. The errors were analyzed to show the language interference.

Omission Type

Example 1:

Beauty pandawa beach

Correction:

The Beauty of pandawa beach

Analysis:

An omission error occurs when an element of information in the source text is left out of the target text (Rusmiati, 2019). Missing preposition, article, or sentences within a passage may be marked as one or more errors of omission, depending on how much is omitted. In the underlined part of this sentence, the participants omitted the definite article "the". This article was used before singular and plural nouns when the noun was specific. In the sentence, the participant wrote about one specific characteristic which was "the beauty".

Besides, the participant also omitted the preposition "of". It is used to express specific identity or particular item within a category or indicate the relationship between a part and a whole sentence. The "of" preposition in the sentence above is to show which beauty that the participant wrote about.

Example 2:

Pandawa beach is one of the tourist in Bali.

Correction:

Pandawa beach is one of the tourist attractions in Bali.

Analysis:

In the underlined part of this sentence, the participant omitted the noun in noun phrase. A noun phrase is a group of two or more words that is headed by a noun that includes modifiers. A noun phrase can function as a subject, an object, or a complement within a sentence. In this sentence the noun phrase functions as an object.

The participant omitted the head word that should be attraction or destination. This incomplete thought can cause a different interpretation about the meaning of the sentence. It can lead to misunderstanding, because if there is no word "attraction or destination" the meaning will be Pandawa beach is a tourist meanwhile Pandawa beach is a place for holiday or "tourist attraction" in Bali.

Addition Type

Example 1:

It is located behind the cliffs-cliffs.

Correction:

It is located behind the cliffs.

Analysis:

Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982) stated that addition is characterized by the presence of an item, which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. In the underlined sentence, the participant wrote repeated word to indicate pluralism. But actually she already added "s" on the word "cliff" to show pluralism.

This error indicates interference of the mother tongue which is Bahasa Indonesia. In Bahasa Indonesia repeated word is used to show plural noun. This grammatical structure directly affected the translation text because the participant probably assumed that the rules of repeated word could be applied on the target language. This error happened because the participant attempted to translate the sentence from source language to target language word by word and applied the rule of the mother tongue.

Example 2:

Also known as the name Kutuh beach

Correction:

Also known as Kutuh beach

Analysis:

Addition type is the presence of an item that should not be in the sentence. This sentence contains addition type because the participant wrote redundantly. An alias name or AKA (Also Known As) is used when someone or something has several names. In the sentence, the participant already wrote "also known as" before the other name of Pandawa beach which is Kutuh beach. So the underlined part should not be in the sentence because the sentence is already complete.

Misformation Type

Example 1:

The roar of the wafes

Correction:

The sound of the waves

Analysis:

Misformation is considered to be the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure (Hendrawaty, 2018). In the underlined part of the sentence, the participant used two incorrect forms.

The first one was “roar” instead of “sound”. The word “roar” refers to a loud sound, like a roar of a lion. Meanwhile the waves is more likely paired with the word “sound”. The second is “wafes” instead of “waves”. This one wrong letter in the word could have different interpretations. These error was resulted from the lack of English vocabulary and the wrong use of the word. In this case, errors are possible related to correctness and appropriateness.

Example 2:

Visitory can swin

Correction:

Visitor can swim

Analysis:

The use of the wrong form of morpheme or word in a sentence is categorized as misformation type. In this sentence, the participant made error in choosing the word and mistyped. The word visitory is an error because the noun for visit is visitor not a visitory. The participant also wrote swin, instead of swim. Even though it looked similar, a wrong letter in a word can change the whole meaning.

Disordering Type

Example 1

Surrounded by the cliffs high.

Correction:

Surrounded by the high cliffs

Analysis:

Disordering errors are classified by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance (Ellis, 1994). In the underlined part of the sentence, the participant incorrectly ordered the words in this sentence. The correct syntactical order was “high cliffs”. But the participant wrote the reverse. This error happens because of the influence of mother tongue. In Bahasa Indonesia the placement of the adjective is put after the noun. As an example, the word “*Tebing tinggi*” in bahasa Indonesia. The noun “*tebing*” is put before the adjective. Meanwhile in English, the noun is put after the adjective, so it becomes high cliff not cliff high. In this case, mother tongue syntax affects the position of target language grammar categories which indicates interference.

The participant wrote the noun first rather than the premodifier whereas the target language rules demand the reverse. It happened because the participant followed the

mother tongue rule in translating the phrase. The rule is different with the source language Bahasa Indonesia. In Bahasa Indonesia, the modifier is placed after the noun. So it resulted in the disordering error in participant text.

Example 2:

Sand white enchanting

Correction:

Enchanting white sand

Analysis:

In this phrase the error found in the placement of noun and the order of adjectives. The word “sand” as the head word should be placed at the end of the phrase, not at the beginning. The participant also made error in ordering the adjective, because the adjectives are normally placed in a particular order. Adjectives, which described opinions or attitudes (e.g. wonderful) usually come first, before more neutral and factual ones. Here are the order of adjectives according to Cambridge Dictionary:

1. **Opinion** such as lovely, beauty and wonderful
2. **Size** such as big, small, and tall
3. **Physical quality** such as thin, tidy and rough
4. **Shape** such as square, oval, and triangle
5. **Age** such as young, old, and youthful
6. **Color** such as white, blue, and pink
7. **Origin** such as Indonesian, Japanese, and dutch
8. **Material** such as plastic, wood, and paper
9. **Type** such as U-shaped, and four-sided
10. **Purpose** such as cleaning, cooking and hammering

Based on the adjectives order, the correct phrase should be “Enchanting white sand” because it contains adjective of opinion and color. The opinion should be placed first then followed by color and ended by the head word. This error can happen because of the influence of the mother tongue. In Bahasa Indonesia, the modifiers come after the noun while in English it requires the opposite.

Based on the discussion above, it can be seen that there are several English structures that can be interfered by Indonesian structure and resulted in errors. In terms of omission type, it was found that the participants mostly omitted the article, the verb, the preposition, the auxiliary verb, and the headword in a noun phrase. The errors happened because of the differences between the native language and the target language. In terms of addition type, the participant made error on redundancy such as using double verb and double word to show pluralism. This type of error appears because in Indonesia, double words are used to show pluralism. In terms of misformation type, the participants made errors on wrong choice of diction. In this case, the lack of vocabularies and the influence of Indonesian words were the causes of the errors. The last on disordering type, it was found that the participants mostly made errors on arranging noun and adjective in a noun phrase. It happened because the rules between the two languages are different. In Indonesian language, the noun comes before the adjective while in English, the adjective comes before the noun. Those differences interfered the way the students translated text and resulted in errors. As an implication, the teachers need to equip the students with the skills required in writing proper English text by explicitly teaching them English writing elements. In addition, the teachers need to facilitate students’ reading exposure to English texts as target language.

CONCLUSION

All participants made different errors on their translation text since they applied the first language rules to the target language rules. It can be seen from four types of language interference found on students' translation text. The four categories of language Interference are omission that happens when an element of information in the source language is left out of the target language, addition occurs when there is a presence of an item that must not appear in a well formed utterance, misformation showing the use of incorrect form or structure, and disordering when the placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes is incorrect. It is also revealed that the most frequent error is misformation. Misformation indicates the use of an incorrect form of a certain linguistic in the target language utterance. It can be seen from the calculation of error. From twenty participants, that are 413 errors found. It consists of 121 (29,29%) omission, 92 (22,27%) addition, 156 (38%) misformation, and 44 (11%) disordering. In this case, when the students struggled in translating the text, the students tend to use their first language rules. That action led to errors influenced by first language interference. Furthermore, less mastery of vocabulary and grammar also contributed on incapability to comprehend the target language. This study gives benefit for both the teachers as well as the students. For the teachers, they can recognize some common errors that are produced by the learners to help them improve teaching and learning English. The result of this research can also be an evaluation for teachers and parents to check the way foreign language is taught. It is very important to be aware and to make the students knowledgeable about the existence of differences between their native language and a foreign language so they can avoid committing the errors that hinder their learning of the second language. The benefits that the students get from this study is an awareness about the existence of errors resulted from their mother tongue and this awareness can help them in avoiding the errors when they are translating a text. This research hopefully provides new insight about language interference theories and it can be used as a reference for further investigation. Despite some benefits, this study is limited to describe the errors made by the students in translating the text. Further studies that investigate some treatments to reduce the students' errors in translating the text will be very advantageous.

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