

THE SOURCE OF ERROR IN TRANSLATION

Munawir¹

State Islamic Institute of Parepare

munawir@iainpare.ac.id

Abstract

Based on the preliminary study, most students made error in writing abstract especially in translating Indonesian language into English language. Therefore, the aim of this research was to find out the sources of translation error and the dominant of source of error. This research used a descriptive method. In getting the data, this research applied a purposive sampling technique and the data of this research was taken secretly. The subject of this research was 61 abstracts of theses and dissertation taken from various universities in Makassar and analyzed by using error analysis technique. The result of the research showed that in the sources of translation error, the most error made by the students was Syntactic with 120 errors (62.1%) Lexical with 42 errors (21.7%), Unclassified with 17 errors (8.8%), and the least was Morphological aspect with 14 errors (7.2%). It can be concluded that the dominant source of error was the syntactic aspect.

Keywords: Translation, Error analysis, Source of error

Introduction

Learning a language is really close of doing some errors, the learners form a sentence and recheck its accuracy to find the error. According to Chiang (1981), learners' errors are sometimes their own system to approximate the true system of the second or the target language. Therefore, the Error Analysis (EA) study is to check a learner's errors longitudinally in order to state the individual student's hypothesis and measure the progress that the students achieved. White in Bena (2010) asserts that doing errors is a natural part of learning a language. It is so clear that making errors is common in the learning process, especially in learning a language.

Without translation, the information available over the world will not be known by the other people as it should be. In fact, translation has been taught and applied in Indonesian country since long time ago following the English teaching development. Translation study is not an independent program; it is just a kind of subject involved in language or linguistic

program. However, most English teachers and linguistics cannot do translation well. Simply to say, translation study needs a new orientation or focus in its teaching or training.

University students feel the need of translation work into English in order to inform what they have done. It is a contribution to the development of science. Post graduate program of Universities in Makassar also takes this role. They make an attempt by translating the abstract into English to convey the ideas of original text in the thesis and dissertation to the outside world. An abstract is the important part of a thesis and dissertation containing the basic ideas of a thesis and dissertation. By reading the abstract, the reader can decide whether he or she needs to read the whole content of thesis and dissertation or not.

Doing translation is not an easy task. The translator should have equal knowledge of the source language (SL) and target language (TL). This requirement must be fulfilled because translating a text, particularly abstract, is not just translating the words but also concepts and ideas. The researcher chose the translation of abstract of theses and dissertations as a source of investigation to find out the source of translation, which is from Indonesian text into English. This research found out the sources of translation errors made by the students in writing abstracts of theses and dissertations and also found out the dominant source of translation errors in writing abstracts of theses and dissertations.

Nida and Taber (1982: 33), points out three steps or phases of a translation process. The phases are;

- 1) Analysis. In this phase, a translator is advised to analyze or understand the text before transferring or translate it into the target language. The points to understand the text are the grammatical relationship, meaning of each word, and the combinations of words.
- 2) Transfer. After analyzing the text of the source language, a translator transfers the message from the source language into the target language.
- 3) Restructuring. After transferring the text, the translator should reconstruct or restructure the transferred text for getting an acceptable target language construction.

Sager in Akil (2006: 57) states that source of errors are any factors which lead the students to make errors in transferring the intentions or messages of the source language text into the target language. In this research, sources of error might be due to:

- 1) Morphological (word forms and morphological process). For example: the word good (adjective) becomes goodly (adverb) while actually the adverb form of 'good' is 'well'. Writing the plural form of 'sheep' (singular) with 'sheeps' while the true plural form of "sheep" is the same as the singular form.

- 2) Lexical (word choice or diction, register, or idiom). There are many words in English have different meaning in Indonesian-based on its word class. It can be the source of error if the translators disable to determine the real meaning of a word. For example, the word 'well' can be translated into 'sehat' in the adjective class, 'secara baik' in the adverb class, and 'sumur' in noun class.
- 3) Syntactic aspect (word order, phrase construction, clause and sentence construction). Every language has its own word order and most of the language has different word order such as the phrase 'rumah baru', 'rumah' in English is 'house' and 'baru' is 'new'. So, in translating that phrase by using Indonesian word order it will be "house new" but in English word order it is 'new house' by putting the adjective (new) before noun class (house).

Graf (2008: 2) states that abstract is the most important part of a journal article. It is the most widely read, and it includes all the main points. However, it may also be the most difficult to write. So much must be included within a few words.

Zoltan (2005: 1) defines the word abstract comes from the Latin *abstractum*, which means a condensed form of a longer piece of writing.

It can be concluded that abstract is a brief comprehensive summary of the contents of an article or project that allows the reader to survey the contents quickly.

Method

This research used descriptive method to analyze and expose the errors of abstracts of theses and dissertation in order to answer the questions which are planned in the research questions. In getting the data, this research applied purposive sampling. This research is hidden research so, the data of this research was got secretly. The data of this research was the abstracts of theses and dissertations of universities in Makassar. The researcher got 61 abstracts of theses and dissertations from different universities and analyzed them by using error analysis technique.

There are some steps in analyzing the data, they are:

1. Research Data

Before performing the analysis, the relevant data was sorted and copied into the data sheets. The data sheets used to facilitate the analysis and to avoid overlapping of each kind of analysis. The sample of data sheet used in this research is given below.

Table 1. Data Sheet

Source sentence	Permasalahan yang dibahas di dalam penelitian ini menyangkut kesantunan bahasa guru terhadap siswa.
Translation key	The problem of this research is about the suavity of the teacher's language to the students.
Translation of abstract	Problem studied concern on the teacher's language suavity to the students.

2. Procedure of Data Analysis

Error analysis techniques were used in analyzing the data. The techniques of data analysis in this research involved four steps:

- a. Analyzing the translation error of abstracts of theses and dissertations by using a descriptive method. For this purpose, content analysis applied by taking sentence as the unit of analysis. The analysis did base on the sources of error (morphological, lexical, and syntactic).
- b. Classifying the translation errors into three sources of errors.
- c. Calculating the total number and percentage of each source of errors to find out the amount of each source of errors by using the following:

P: Number of percentages

F: Frequency of sources of errors in translation

N: Number of whole errors in abstracts.

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

To illustrate better of how the procedure takes place, the data analysis grid given below.

Table 2. Data Analysis Grid

No.	Source sentence	Student's Translation	Translation key	Sources of Error
				1/2/3/4
1.	Permasalahan yang dibahas di dalam penelitian ini menyangkut kesantunan bahasa guru terhadap siswa.	<u>Problem studied concern</u> on the teacher's language suavity to the students.	The problem of this research is about the suavity of the teacher's language to the students.	1/2/3

Source of Error: 1= Morphological. 2=Lexical. 3=Syntactic. 4=Unclassified

The data analysis grid above was used to analyze and classify the data based on the sources of error in translation. The data above showed that all the sources of error are occurred in the sentence above.

To calculate the total of frequency and percentage of each source of errors, the researcher used the table below:

Table 3. Classification table

Abstract	Sources of Error								TOTAL		
	1		2		3		4				
All	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Abstracts										100	

Sources of Error: 1= Morphological. 2=Lexical. 3=Syntactic. 4=Unclassified

Results

The three sources of translation errors, namely Morphological, Lexical and Syntactic aspect from the abstracts of theses and dissertation, were tabulated and can be found in the table below:

Table 4. The frequency and percentage of sources of error.

Abstract	Sources of Error								TOTAL	
	1		2		3		4			
All	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Abstracts	14	7.2	42	21.7	120	62.1	17	8.8	193	100

From 61 theses and dissertations, the researcher found 193 sources of translation error. The most to the least sources of errors made by the students in translating the abstracts from Indonesian into English were syntactic aspect with 120 errors (62.1%), lexical aspect with 42 errors (21.7%), the next was unclassified aspect with 17 errors (8.8%), and the least was morphological aspect with 14 errors (7.2%).

The students' translation abstract of theses and dissertation was classified into the three sources of errors in translation namely Morphological, Lexical and Syntactic aspect. The classification and examples of the sources of error in translation can be found in the further descriptions below.

a. Morphological aspect

The first source of error in translation is morphological aspect. In this research, the percentage of error in morphological aspect was 7.2 %. The example can be found below:

The first example:

SOURCE TRANSLATION

Kepraktisan bahan ajar multimedia yang mengacu pada *kegunaannya* adalah sangat baik (87,44%),

STUDENTS' TRANSLATION

The *practically* of MMLM referred to the *usability* and the appropriateness. The usability which included the appeal, the clarity and the facility was very good (87,44%),

TRANSLATION KEY

The practicality of multimedia learning referring to the use was very good (87,44%),

EXPLANATION

Every word has its own class and the class of the word has a big influence of the meaning of the sentence. The using of wrong words make the readers disable to get the point of writing well. In the example above, the word “kepraktisan” translated into “the practically” is an error in morphological aspect. “kepraktisan” is a noun while “practically” is an adverb with its meaning “secara praktis”. The word “kepraktisan” can be translated into “the practicality”. The next, the word “kegunaan” translated into “usability” while the true translation of word “kegunaan” is “the use”.

The second example:

SOURCE TRANSLATION

Penelitian ini difokuskan pada upaya untuk meneliti dan mengungkapkan *secara deskriptif* analisis dinamika HMI MPO

STUDENTS' TRANSLATION

This study focused on the efforts to investigate and reveal *descriptive* the dynamics of HMI MPO

TRANSLATION KEY

This study was focused on the efforts to investigate and reveal the dynamics of HMI descriptively analytically

EXPLANATION

The example above showed an error of morphological aspect because the word “secara deskriptif” with adverb word class translated into “descriptive” with adjective word class. The ability to choose the word is the way to be a good translator because the true word form facilitates the reader to understand the writing well.

b. Lexical aspect

The second source of error in translation is the lexical aspect. In this research, the percentage of error in lexical aspect was 21.7 %. The example can be found below:

The first example:

SOURCE TRANSLATION

Konsekuensi dan perubahan *masyarakat sekitar hutan* di balik dramaturgi perlawanan

STUDENTS' TRANSLATION

The consequences and changes on *society* behind the dramaturgi resistance

TRANSLATION KEY

The consequences and changes of forest community behind the resistance of dramaturgy.

EXPLANATION

Translation is the way to transfer and choose the words from the source language to the target language. The wrong word choice is a big problem in translation. In the example above, the word “masyarakat sekitar hutan” translated into “society”. It is a wrong word choice because “society” means all kinds of people, while the purpose of the source language is focused on the forest community. The word “society” has ambiguity meaning and can confuse the reader about the meaning of the writing.

The second example:

SOURCE TRANSLATION

Ada kontribusi secara bersama minat dan sikap terhadap hasil belajar *pendidikan jasmani*, olahraga dan kesehatan.

STUDENTS' TRANSLATION

There was significant contribution of interest and attitude jointly toward learning achievement of *male student* of sport and health education.

TRANSLATION KEY

There was significant jointly contribution of interest and attitude towards learning achievement of physical, sport and health education.

EXPLANATION

In the example above, the word “pendidikan jasmani” translated into “male student”. That is a wrong word choice and automatically misleads the readers. Choosing “male student” as the translation of the word “pendidikan jasmani” is a mistake because physical education is not only for the male but also for students.

c. Syntactic aspect

The second source of error in translation is the syntactic aspect. In this research, the percentage of error in syntactic aspect was 62.1 %. The example can be found below:

The first example:

SOURCE TRANSLATION

Keseluruhan data yang diperoleh dianalisis melalui tahap-tahap identifikasi...

STUDENTS' TRANSLATION

The entire data obtained were analyzed through stages of data identification...

TRANSLATION KEY

The entire obtained data were analyzed through stages of data identification...

EXPLANATION

To facilitate the readers' comprehension, the translator should pay close attention to the sentence construction, including word order. In the example above, the student translated "keseluruhan data yang diperoleh" into "the entire data got". That is a wrong sentence construction because "got" actually is an adjective that changed "data" as the head of noun phrase construction. So the word "got" should be put before the word "data" (got data). If the word "got" puts after the "data", it means "got" is not an adjective but verb and the meaning differs from the source language in the other word, the translation is error.

The second example:

SOURCE TRANSLATION

Tersedianya model dan perangkat pengajaran bahasa Indonesia yang dapat *membangkitkan motivasi belajar* dan kualitas belajar serta hasil belajar peserta didik.

STUDENTS' TRANSLATION

Availability model and the teaching of Indonesian *to be motivating to learn* and quality of learning and learning outcomes of learners.

TRANSLATION KEY

The availability of the model and Indonesian language teaching tools for increasing learning motivation, quality of learning and student's learning outcomes.

EXPLANATION

Every language has its own word order, including the English language. The example above showed an error in sentence construction. The word "membangkitkan motivasi belajar" translated into "to be motivating to learn" is an error of translation. The words "motivasi belajar" is a noun phrase and should be translated into "learning motivation" while the "learning motivation" as a noun phrase is an object from the word "membangkitkan" translated into "for increasing". So, the real translation of "membangkitkan motivasi belajar" is "for increasing learning motivation".

Discussion

Based on the result of error analysis in translation of abstract, there are three categories of source of errors, i.e. the morphological aspect, lexical, and syntactic aspect. All categories find in this research. The writer concludes that the students' abstract still involves errors in morphological, lexical, and syntactic aspect. The writer concludes syntactic aspect is the most dominant source in this research with 120 errors (62.1%) and the least error is the morphological aspect with 14 errors (7.2%). Besides, the second source of error in translation is the lexical aspect. In this research, the percentage of error in the lexical aspect is 42 errors (21.7%). Students in abstract works make many mistakes. The students contribute a big number source of errors in syntactic aspect, in contrary only a few numbers of errors in lexical errors. The figure about the sources of translation error can be seen below:

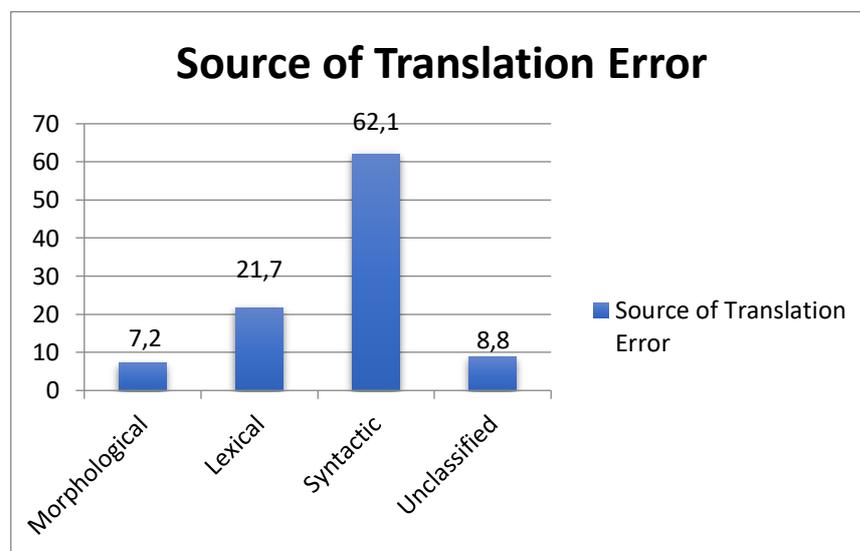


Figure 1. Sources of Translation Error.

Through this study, it is identified that there are three kinds of source of errors which involved in producing abstract, actually. This is not only supported by the statement that the students encountered difficulties in lexical aspect in doing translation. The difficulties were caused by the limitation of students' competences. Besides the different strategies applied for the same units of text, the students also had different ways to solve the same problems they deal with in their translation activity.

The finding shows that there are three aspects of the source of errors which is dominated by syntactic aspect in abstract translation. In this sense, most students fail in constructing sentences for the target language. This can be proven by many sentences which have different sense to the target language. This is because of the lack of knowledge about English grammar.

Besides, they lack of understanding of selecting an appropriate word to interpret their individual meaning. In syntactic error, most of the students are confused about an appropriate word order to express their meaning. It is caused by incomplete learning of grammar. The essential composition of word which involved meaning, sense, and nuance is not taught well on the students' learning activity. There must be a good teaching about syntactic itself to the students in order to avoid erroneous word order in the sentences in writing abstract.

It is in line with Mashhady stated all people know the importance of translation. But the act of translating is not an easy act for the translator, who deals with two languages having different syntactic and pragmatic rules. In addition, the students cannot understand Basic English grammar, which is associated with the sequence development of learning English for technical communication. The result will have benefit for material development, especially in the provision of materials in the Language Learning Center. This statement obviously shows that English language learning must instill Basic English grammar to reduce error particularly in abstract writing activity.

In this research, the researcher found any source of error that can be classified into the three sources of error (morphological, lexical, and syntactic) eventually named "unclassified aspect". For classifying the error, the researcher should analyze the sentence writing by the students while in this case, the researcher did not classify the error with the three sources of error (morphological, lexical, and syntactic) because the students do not translate the whole sentence from the source language to the target language in the other word, the translation to the target language is nothing.

Conclusion

The aims of this research were to find out the sources of translation error, namely Morphological, Lexical and Syntactic aspect and to find out the frequency of the error.

Based on the findings in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that the students of universities in Makassar are still difficult to transfer the message from the source language to the target language. The most students' error in the sources of translation error is Syntactic – Lexical – Unclassified – and the least is Morphological aspect. The students are difficult to choose the word order, word choice and word form to make a good sentence in the target language.

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