

## **Errors Made by English Literature Students in Translating News Text**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research is aimed at describing the types of translation errors made by the English Literature Students in translating news text from English into Indonesian. The present study employed a descriptive qualitative study. The research subject was the sixth-semester students of the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Economics, Law, and Humanities, Universitas Ngudi Waluyo who have taken a Translation Course. The news text was taken from the Jakarta Post and it consists of 22 paragraphs. The news texts were then translated into Bahasa Indonesia and they become the target texts as the sources of data to investigate the students' translation errors. They were then classified into five types of errors according to Vilar et al. (2006, 698). The research results revealed that there were 108 translation errors in the form of incorrect words (60,2%), punctuation (18.5%), missing words (12,03%), and word order (0,9%). It can be concluded that the most frequent errors made by the students are incorrect words, punctuation, and missing words.

**Keywords:** Translation errors, news text, English-Indonesian Translation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language and human civilization are inseparable as both walk together along with their development. Language is used as the means to express thoughts and feelings either written language or spoken language. In the department of English Literature, Faculty of Economics, Law, and Humanities, Universitas Ngudi Waluyo, the main discussed language is English.

One of the main courses studied in this department is Translation. In this course, the students learn the translation techniques, strategies, and

methods for translating Indonesian text to English and vice versa. Catford (1965) defines translation as “the replacement of a textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language)”. The ability in translating texts plays a very essential role in exchanging information across languages. “Without translation, prospective scientists will be left behind in the following the development of science, moreover if they cannot read the foreign language text” (Widyamartaya, 1989).

The error made by learners is sometimes systematic (Ellis, 1997). It is revealed that learners’ errors are systematic and it represents the developmental stage of the learners. It is, therefore, in a certain condition, learners might have different errors but the same sources.

In the teaching and learning process especially in English Language Teaching (ELT), making an error is a part of learning. Hence, this issue can be utilized as a source of learning in class (Lightown & Spada). Furthermore, Parvin (2019) argued that identifying the types and the causes of errors might assist the learners to deal with their common errors. This is why this study needs to be done to assist the translation course.

Several previous of research concerned with error analysis in translation products have been conducted by scholars. Krisetyawati (2010) investigated the students’ errors in English-Indonesia translation of noun phrases by the fifth-semester students of the English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Sebelas Maret University. Four types of errors are identified namely omission, misinformation, misordering, and addition. Omission error has the highest percentage (49.3%) Narulita (2018) investigated translation errors in Narrative text. Missing substitute words, omission, and wrong lexical choices are found as the most frequent errors. Additionally, Silalahi, Rafli, and Rasyid (2018) also researched scientific texts as the object of study.

Napitupulu (2017) investigated the abstracts translated with Google Translate and classified the errors into lexicosemantic, tense, preposition, word order, distribution, and use of verb group, and active and passive voice errors. In the present study, the classification of translation errors proposed by Vilar et al. (2006) is employed by categorizing them into missing words, word order, incorrect words, unknown words, and punctuation errors.



Figure 1. Classification of Translation Errors (Vilar et al., 2006)

## METHOD

A descriptive qualitative study was employed in this study. The research subjects were the students taking the Translation course. The research objects were the translation errors found in translating English news texts into Indonesian. The translation errors were classified into five categories proposed by Vilar et al (2006) namely missing words, word order, incorrect words, unknown words, and punctuation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were 108 translation errors made by 15 students taking the translation class. The data were then analyzed and categorized according to Vilar et al (2006). Through the careful and deep analysis of the students' translation products, the researcher concluded that almost all types of errors occurred except the unknown word.

The most frequently occurred was the incorrect word in the form of wrong lexical choice and incorrect form. The majority of the students failed to establish accurate translations of certain difficult words because of their limited knowledge and understanding of vocabulary.

Moreover, in terms of incorrect form, the most frequently occurring error dealt with tenses. The students failed to transfer the use and properties of a certain type of tenses into Bahasa Indonesia. The following table represents the frequency of errors that occurred in the students' translation.

Table 1. Frequency of Errors

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No.	Types of Error	Errors' Frequency	Total	%	
1.	Missing Word	Content Word Filler Word	8 5	13	12,03%
2.	Word Order	Wrong Lexical Choice	10 42	10	0,9%
3.	Incorrect Word	Incorrect Disambiguation Incorrect Form Extra Word Style Idiom	0 23 10 0 0	65	60,2%
4.	Unknown Word		0	0	0%
5.	Punctuation		20	20	18,5%
		TOTAL		108	100%

### Missing Words

Two types of missing words are found in the students' translations namely content words and filler words. Content words represent the important words to express the meaning of the sentence. Filler words represent the words needed to achieve the grammatical accuracy of the sentence.

#### Content Word

The findings showed eight errors in the form of missing content words.

Example:

**SL:** After a **virtual** Cabinet meeting on Monday

**TL:** Setelah rapat kabinet pada hari senin

**BT:** After a Cabinet meeting on Monday

The above example showed that there was a content word "virtual" missed to be translated into the target language. The word "virtual" should be translated into "virtual/maya" which becomes the adjective of the noun "pertemuan". This adjective is essentially needed to be translated as it adds more information to the word "meeting" that differs, for instance, from the phrase "face-to-face meeting".

#### Filler Word

There were five errors in the form of filler words.

For instance:

**SL: While** once again dismissing the option of imposing a lockdown on the capital, the government would instead impose stricter regulations on social distancing.

**TL:** Sekali lagi menolak opsi untuk melakukan lockdown di ibu kota,

pemerintah akan menerapkan peraturan yang lebih ketat pada jaga jarak sosial.

**BT:** Once again dismissing the option of imposing a lockdown on the capital, the government would impose stricter regulations on social distancing.

According to the above example, the translation of the conjunction “while” was missed. Besides, that conjunction was essentially used to express a contradictory meaning of the sentence. Therefore, the intended meaning of the source language was not conveyed.

### **Word Order**

This type of error represents the incorrect structure of the sentence. Ten errors were found in the students’ translations.

Example:

**ST:** After a **virtual Cabinet meeting** on Monday,

**TT:** *Setelah kabinet rapat virtual pada hari Senin,*

**BT:** After the cabinet met virtually on Monday,

The finding showed that the student failed to establish an accurate and faithful translation of the double adjectives of the noun “meeting”. The phrase “virtual Cabinet meeting” should be translated into “pertemuan kabinet virtual”. The word “meeting” should be the head noun. However, the student failed to understand that it was a noun phrase.

### **Incorrect Word**

Vilar et al. (2006) classified incorrect words into six categories namely wrong lexical choice, incorrect disambiguation, incorrect form, extra words, style, and idiom. However, only three categories were found in the students’ translation namely wrong lexical choice, incorrect form, and extra words.

#### Wrong Lexical Choice

This type of error is the most frequently occurring datum in this study with 42 data.

Example:

**ST:** Provincial and city **administrations**, as well as **communities**,

**TT:** *Pemerintah provinsi dan pemerintah kota, sebagai komunitas,*

**BT:** Provincial and city government, as community

The above findings showed that the student failed to provide an accurate translation of the word “administration” and “communities”. The word “administration” should be translated into “pemerintahan”, not “pemerintah”. The word “administration” refers to the system that the government executes. Additionally, the word “communities” was not supposed to be translated into “komunitas” but “rakyat” because the context here is talking about the government, administration, and people (communities). Incorrect word in the form of wrong lexical choice indicates the students’ limited access to

vocabulary.

### Incorrect Form

This type of error represents the use of incorrect grammatical forms such as the use of tenses, subject-verb agreement, and the incorrect form of words. There were 23 data found for this category.

Example:

**ST:** The Jokowi administration **has been** pressured to impose a lockdown on the capital

**TT:** Pemerintahan Jokowi ditekan untuk menerapkan lockdown di ibu kota

**BT:** The Jokowi administration was pressured to impose a lockdown

The above datum showed that the student failed to interpret the use of present perfect tense in the sentence. The present perfect tense presents an activity that was done in the past without any specific information of the time. When a specific time is presented, the simple past tense is used. Therefore, the above sentence should be translated into “pemerintahan Jokowi **telah ditekan** untuk melaksanakan kuncitara/isolasi di ibukota.

### **Extra Word**

This type of error is concerned with the unimportant words in the translation. Those words are not supposed to be present in the target text. Ten data were found in the students’ translations.

Example:

**ST:** Its approach is very much security-based

**TT:** Pendekatan ini adalah dasar penjagaan **yang sesuai**,

**BT:** This approach is a proper basic of guidance

The above example of extra word error showed that the student unessentially added the word “yang sesuai” which was not present in the source language. This addition translated became messy and hard to understand.

### **Punctuation**

Punctuation errors occurred 20 times in the students’ translation. Some punctuation was violated by the students such as capital letters, full stops, commas, and quotation marks.

Example:

**ST:** I hope that all ministers ensure that the central and regional governments have the same vision and policy,” he said.

**TT:** Saya berharap semua menteri memastikan bahwa pemerintah pusat dan pemerintah daerah memiliki pandangan dan kebijakan yang sama,” Ucapnya.

**BT:** I hope that all ministers ensure that the central and regional governments have the same vision and policy,” he said.

The example above showed that the student made an error in the form of the wrong capitalization. When translating the sentence “he said” into “Ucapnya”,

the letter “u” should not be capitalized.

### **Additional Findings**

Through careful analysis of the students’ translation, the present study revealed that the majority of the students tend to borrow words from the source language. For instance:

**SL:** While once again dismissing the option of imposing a **lockdown** on the capital,

**TL:** Daripada sekali lagi menerapkan opsi untuk memberlakukan **lockdown** di ibu kota,

**SL:** “I ask that large-scale social restrictions and **physical distancing** policies be enforced more strictly and more effectively...”

**TL:** Saya meminta pembatasan sosial dalam skala besar dan aturan **physical distancing** akan diselenggarakan lebih ketat dan secara lebih efektif...

**SL:** ...the government would guarantee the supply of staple commodities in all areas in the country, including medical supplies such as face masks, **hand sanitizer**, and **disinfectant**.

**TL:** ... pemerintah akan menjamin pasokan bahan pokok diseluruh daerah, termasuk pasokan medis seperti masker, **hand sanitizer** dan **disinfectant**.

According to several data above, it can be revealed that the majority of the students did not translate those words and kept them as they are. The students’ tendency to borrow the words from the source language is because of the habit of listening and reading those words in their daily life since the pandemic of Covid 19 struck. They have been accustomed to listening to and saying the words “lockdown”, “physical distancing”, “social distancing”, “hand sanitizer”, and “disinfectant” even when speaking in Bahasa Indonesia. It makes them familiar with those words even though they do not know their meaning in Bahasa Indonesia but they do understand what they mean.

### **CONCLUSION**

The research results revealed that there were 108 translation errors in the form of incorrect words (60,2%), punctuation (18.5%), missing words (12,03%), and word order (0.9%). It can be concluded that the most frequent errors made by the students are incorrect words, punctuation, and missing words. The most frequent error that occurred is the incorrect words in the form of wrong lexical choices and incorrect form. Those errors are caused by the limited knowledge and understanding of the students in applying accurate grammatical features and vocabulary. It represents that grammar and vocabulary teaching and learning should be more maintained and improved.

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