STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN INDONESIAN FOLKLORE TRANSLATED TEXT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the kinds of errors in the use of simple past tense in narrative translation text. The data of this study were taken from the translation assignment done by the sixth-semester students of the English Department in University of Widya Dharma Pontianak in academic year 2019/2020. This study is done by using the descriptive qualitative method. The data are taken from 24 translated texts produced by 24 students. The instrument used in this study is translation assignment, where they were asked to translate the Indonesian folklore into English. The data is analyzed by following some steps which are collecting the translation data from students, identifying the errors, classifying the errors based on the types of errors, then showing and explaining the errors in percentage in descriptions. The results of the study show that there were some errors in using the simple past tense that occurred in the students' translation texts. The errors were classified into four types of errors namely addition errors, omission errors, missed ordering errors and missed formation errors. In percentage, the total frequency of errors is 531 with 83 (15.6%,) addition errors, 101 (19.1%) omission errors, 58 (10.9%) missed ordering errors and 289 (54.4%) missed formation errors. The highest frequency of error made by the students has missed formation errors and the lowest frequency of errors is missed ordering errors.

Keywords: translation, error analysis, simple past tense, narrative text, folklore

Introduction

In Indonesia, especially in education, the learners are expected to master the foreign language both verbal and written. Mastering oral and written English helps the learners as the speakers of the foreign language understand how to use the language properly. We can do this by applying the language in their communication every day and using it as a habit. Besides that, the use of English as communication media is used as culture appropriation for people to introduce their culture to others. However, in the reality, using English as the second language will not be easy as Indonesian. People face many challenges and problems in language learning. It also happens when they apply the language to their daily activities. They also need to learn many grammatical rules in English so that they could apply the language well.

Since English is a second language, people sometimes naturally make errors in their language learning. According to Harmer (1983), errors are part of the students' interlingua. It is a version of the language that the learners have in one stage of their learning development which is continually reshaped the students' understanding as they aim to get full mastery in learning the language. From this explanation, we can say that language learning errors help

learners develop their knowledge. When the learners make errors, they will get some feedback that can help them in correcting their assignments. This process can help the students in having a further understanding of language learning. Errors sometimes may appear in translation learning activities. In translation learning, students sometimes make errors since the translation activities need a full understanding of the rules of the target language, the vocabulary, the grammatical structure and also the pronunciation of the words.

Translation is one of the alternatives that people use to connect themselves with other people that have different languages. It is important because translation helps in understanding the language. According to Nida and Taber (1982), translation is a process of substituting the text in one language to another. It is a process of converting one language to another (using the very basic definition of interlanguage translation, licensed) as it is the end product of this process. (Desjardins, 2021). The translating activity also can be described as the transfer of thought or ideas from one language to another language (Brislin, 1996). These definitions show that translation is the action that includes replacing or transferring messages, ideas, meaning or information from the source language to the target language. This shows that translation is a process performed by people which is done by translating one language to another. The translation proves involved two languages the source language (the original language) and the target language (the translated text language).

One of the texts which usually used in the translation learning activity is Narrative text. This kind of text describes the sequence of events or experiences. In other words, narrative text is a kind of text that tells a story about something in chronological order, for the reader to enjoy (Daulay and Hasugian, 2021). One of the characteristics of this text is the events that are presented in the story usually written in order so that the reader could understand the story starting from the beginning. According to Rebecca (2003), the key to comprehending a narrative is the sense of plot in the story, the theme of the story characters, the events and the relationship between those points to one another. From this, she stated that a narrative text has descriptions of features and rhetorical steps which includes the plot, the characters, and the setting of the story. Other researchers, Anderson and Anderson (2003) states that narrative text usually includes grammatical features namely nouns, adjectives, time words and verbs. The first feature is nouns that identify the specific characters and places in the story; grandfather, stepmother, his wife, etc. The second feature is adjectives that provide accurate descriptions of the characters and setting of the story; magnificent, greedy, humble etc. The third is time words that connect the events to show when the events occur; in the middle of his way, before, after that, etc. The fourth is verbs which shows the actions that occur in the story; laughed, moved, slammed, etc. Anderson and Anderson (2003) also added that narrative texts are created in many kinds of forms. Those are including myths, fairytales, aboriginals, science, fiction dreaming/bedtime stories and romance novels.

Translating a narrative test is quite complicated. There are many parts of narrative text that we need to pay attention to. In translating a narrative text, a translator could not just translate the text word-per-word, but they also need to pay attention to the context of the story (which can be related as well with the culture that is pictured in the story), the grammatical rules of the simple past tense as one of the characteristics of narrative text, and the right choice of English words phrases that are equivalent with the Indonesian. As mentioned above, the writer is interested in analyzing errors especially in the usage of simple past tense in

Indonesian-English translation texts produced by Translation II students. This analysis aims to find out the frequency and the kind of errors that are usually produced by them. The writer has taught the class and often found some errors in the students' translation text. This study uses the translated text of Indonesian folklore stories as a sample. Indonesian folklore story reflects the diverse cultural and ethnic groups in Indonesia. Each ethnic groups in Indonesia have their collection of folklore that have been told through generations. They keep the stories and use them as bedtime stories for teaching good life values to their children. The translation texts that are taken from the students are the translation text result of many Indonesian folklore stories. Students who get the translation practice often find problems and difficulties in translating Indonesian to English.

Error analysis is often designed to identify the types of errors made by learners in second language learning (Atmowardoyo, 2018). Brown (1987) states that the learners' errors in learning are observed, analyzed and classified to show something is wrong in the learning process within the learner and the activity of the studying of learners' errors is called error analysis. This analysis is important since it describes the sort of errors that the learners made, the causes of the errors and the things that they learn from correcting their assignment. Error analysis is very important since the analysis itself creates a distinct perspective that is employed to own a better understanding of language learning. According to Dulay (1982), there are four types of errors, namely addition errors, omission errors, missed ordering errors and missed formation errors. Addition errors are kinds of errors that are characterized by the appearance of the item in the learners' sentences. Meanwhile, omission errors are the absence of the language elements that must appear in well-formed sentences. Missed ordering errors are the error in the placement of morphemes in the sentence. Missed formation errors are the errors that are characterized by the wrong form of sentences. The error analysis that is carried out in this study is expected to give a contribution to students and teachers or lectures, especially in conducting the translation processes.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive qualitative method that used an error analysis approach. It focuses on analyzing errors made by students in using simple past tense in translating the Indonesian folklores into English. The students who are participated in this study are the sixth-semester students of the English Department in University of Widya Dharma Pontianak in the academic year 2019/2020.

The instrument of this study is a translation assignment where the students need to translate Indonesian folklores into English. For this study, there are 24 Indonesian folklores chosen and translated by 24 students. The results of the translation are taken to gather information about the frequency of errors produced by the students in using simple past tense in translating Indonesian folklores. This also can be the measurement of students' translating ability that can be used in this study.

In this study, the data is analyzed by collecting the data, identifying the errors, classifying the errors and explaining the errors in percentage. In data collection, the students should submit both original and translated text. Then, the researcher starts to identify the errors from the usage of the simple past tense. The researcher identifies and classifies the errors based on

Dulay's et all's error analysis which consists of four types of errors; addition errors, omission errors, missed ordering errors and missed formation errors. Then, the errors are explained into percentages for the result description.

Findings and Discussion

As mentioned before, the first step of data analysis is collecting the data. For this step, the students were asked to translate the Indonesian folklore stories. They were asked to choose their own story, then translate and submit the translation text. The second, the identification of the errors. The identification of errors was focusing on the use of simple past tense errors done by the students in their translated text. Then the errors were classified into four types of errors; addition errors, omission errors, missed formation errors and missed ordering errors. The number of errors can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1.
The Number of Errors in the Translated Texts

Types of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage
Addition	83	15.6 %
Omission	101	19.1 %
Missed Ordering	58	10.9 %
Missed Formation	289	54.4 %
TOTAL	**531**	**100 %**

After finishing the identification of the errors, those errors were classified into the types of errors. There are 10 translated texts used in this study and the total of errors were 531 errors. The 531 errors consist of 83 addition errors, 101 omission errors, 58 missed ordering errors and 289 missed formation errors. The examples of the errors are explained in the discussion of the types of errors below.

1. Addition Errors

The data of the addition errors are taken from the students' errors in adding the language elements in their sentences. There are many kinds of addition errors which are found in the translated text. There errors are the addition of to-be (was/were), the addition of –ed/-d, th addition of verb, and the addition of adverb. For total, there are 83 additional errors found in the translated text. The examples of addition errors are:
   a. The addition of was/were:
     1a) *The news was also reached to Surati's brother, Rupaksa.*
     The sentence should be:
     1b) *The news also reached to Surati's brother, Rupaksa*

   b. The addition of –ed/-d:
     2a) *As he satted on the grass of inside the woods....*
     The sentence should be:
     2b) *As he sat on the grass inside the woods*
   c. The addition of other verb:

3a) *He made <u>planning</u> of going to honeymoon with Surati again*

The sentence should be:

3b) *He made <u>a plan</u> of having honeymoon with Surati again.*

d. The addition of an adverb

4a) *Meanwhile, Dayang Bulan and Paddle Ayu returned <u>to human form</u>*

The sentence should be:

4b) *Meanwhile, Dayang Bulan and Paddle Ayu returned <u>to be human</u>*

2. Omission Errors

For omission type of error, the errors are taken from the absence of some language elements in the translated text. The omission errors which are found in this study are the omission of -ed/d, the omission of to-be (was/were), the omission of verb, the omission of conjunction, and the omission preposition. The total of the errors are 101 errors The examples of the omission errors are presented below:

a. The omission of –ed/d

5a) *Actually, she <u>want</u> to know and peek who had made the food*

The sentence should be:

5b) *Actually, she <u>wanted</u> to know and peek who had made the food*

b. The omission of was/were

6a) *The news of the success of Bandung Bondowoso <u>heard</u> by Raja pengging*

The sentence should be:

6b) *The news of success of Bandng Bondowoso <u>was heard</u> by Raja pengging*

c. The omission of other verb:

7a) *Once upon a time, in the Land of Tanjung Kemuning, South Sumatra, there was a king <u>Ratu Ageng</u> who married a God of Heaven.*

The sentence should be:

7b) *Once upon a time, in the Land of Tanjung Kemuning, South Sumatra, there was a king <u>named Ratu Ageng</u> who married a God of Heaven.*

d. The omission of conjuction:

8a) *Finally, Pitung <u>died covered</u> in blood*

The sentence should be:

8b) *Finally, Pitung <u>died and covered</u> in blood*

e. The omission of preposition:

9a) *Finally, Raden Alit went to the Heavenly Goddess <u>to ask help</u>*

The sentence should be:

9b) *Finally, Raden Alit went to the Heavenly Goddess <u>to ask for help</u>*

3. Missed Ordering Errors

As it explained in the previous explanation, missed ordering errors showed the errors in placing the language element such as morpheme, phrases, or words. There are 58 missed ordering errors found in the translated texts. Those missed ordering errors are the missed ordering errors of subject and to-be, to-be and adverb, adverb, and noun phrase. The missed ordering examples are as follows:

   a. The missed ordering of Subject and to be:
   10a) *How surprise <u>was she</u> after splitting it*
   The sentence should be:
   10b) *How surprised <u>she was</u> after splitting it*

   b. The missed ordering of to-be and adverb
   11a) *Every day, Pitung <u>also was very diligent</u> in praying*
   The sentence should be:
   11b) *Every day, Pitung <u>was also very diligent</u> in praying*

   c. The missed ordering of adverb:
   12a) *Cindelaras <u>diligently took care</u> of the chick.*
   The sentence should be:
   12b) *Cindelaras <u>took care</u> of the chick <u>diligently.</u>*

   d. The missed ordering of noun phrase
   13a) *Now, Nyai Selakanta had left alone, with a <u>heart lonely</u>.*
   The sentence should be:
   13b) *Now, Nyai Selakanta had left alone, with a <u>lonely heart</u>.*

4. Missed Formation Errors

The errors of missed formation errors can be seen from the wrong forms of the simple past tense used by the students in their translated text. The main focused of this type of error is the incorrect form of the simple past tense. There are 289 missed formation errors found in the translated texts. There are missed formation of to-be (was/were), regular verbs, irregular verbs, modal auxiliaries and time signals. The missed formation errors are as follows:

   a. The missed formation of to-be (was/were) in simple past tense:
   14a) *The grandfather's livelihood <u>is</u> as a fish catcher*
   The sentence should be:
   14b) *The grandfather's livelihood <u>was </u>as a fish catcher*

   b. The missed formation of regular verbs in simple past tense:
   15a) *As the sun was setting, the wind <u>blowed </u>boisterously to end the party of the romantic couple.*
   The sentence should be:
   15b) *As the sun was getting, the wind <u>blew</u> boisterously to end the party of the romantic couple*

   c. The missed formation of the irregular verbs in simple past tense:

16a) *Many princes from various <u>come</u> to propose her*
The sentence should be:
16b) *Many princes from various kingdoms <u>came</u> to propose her*

d. The missed formation of modal auxiliaries in simple past tense:
17a) *He chose only big fish and the small fish <u>will be released</u>*
The sentence should be:
17b) *He chose the big fishes and the small fishes <u>would be released</u>*

e. The missed formation of time signals:
18a) *He <u>always</u> prayed <u>everyday</u>*
The sentence should be:
18b) *He prayed <u>everyday</u>*

The final step for the error analysis in this study is the explanation of the errors' percentages. This step aims to show the descriptions of the errors in using simple present tense made by the students in their translated text. The frequencies of the addition errors are 83 or 15.6 % of the total errors, omission errors are 101 or 19.1 %, missed ordering are 58 or 10.9 %, and missed formation errors are 289 or 54.4 % of total errors.

Based on the result and the percentages of the error analysis, it can be seen that the students still have difficulties in translating Indonesian narrative text into English. In translating narrative text, the translators need to understand the grammatical rules in order to avoid some errors in producing English sentences. They need to have a full understanding of simple past tense since this kind of tense is one of the characteristics of narrative text.

From the students' translated text, it can be seen that some students forgot to change the verbs into past tense. Some also still have difficulties in finding the right word which is can be the exact equivalent of Indonesian in English. The other error is when some of them tend to miss the language elements or use the wrong form of words or phrases for the result of their translation. Besides that, they have also had some difficulties in arranging the translated text into good simple past tense since they need to consider the sentence with the context and the culture of the story.

For example, in Indonesian, the sentence is *mata pencaharian si kakek adalah sebagai pencari ikan di laut*. In the translation result, the student translated the sentence into "the grandfather livelihood is as a fish catcher." The translated sentence is a correct translation, but it is considered incorrect because the sentence is not using the simple past tense. Besides that, the student used a fish catcher as the translation for *pencari ikan*. There is nothing wrong with it, but it would be better if the student used the word fisherman as the equivalent of *pencari ikan*. In English, the word fisherman is a name for a person who catches fish in the sea. So the correct translation would be "The grandfather livelihood was as a fisherman".

Another error found in the narrative translated text was related to the use of verbs in the sentence. In Indonesian, the sentence is *Saat matahari terbenam, angina bertiup kencang mengakhiri pesta pasangan romantic itu*. For this sentence, the student translated into "As the sun was setting, the wind blowed boisterously to end the party of the romantic couple". The translation showed that there is error in the verb of the sentence. The student used the word

blowed as the past verb. However, the word blowed is incorrect. The correct past verb of blow is blew. So, the correct translation for this is "As the sun was setting, the wind blew boisterously to end the party of the romantic couple". This is an example of missed formation used in simple past tense which the most errors made by the students in their assignment

One more example of translation error is from the omission of some English language elements. In Indonesian the sentence is *Akhirnya, Raden Alit pergi ke Dewi Khayangan untuk meminta bantuan*. The student translated into "Finally, Raden Alit went to the Heavenly Goddess to ask help." From this translation result, it is shown that the student ignored the preposition for which is necessary to be put after to ask when we see that from the grammatical rules. So the correct translation must be "Finally, Raden Alit went to the Heavenly Goddess to ask for help".

Another example, in Indonesian *Dia selalu berdoa setiap hari* translated into He always prayed every day. This sentence is a correct direct translation sentence. It would be better if the translation is "He prayed every day" which is sound more simple. The errors analysis above showed that some students still have some difficulty and confusion in using the simple past tense for the translated text. It can be seen that some of them were using Indonesian sentence form in English translated text.

Conclusion

The result of this study showed that there are some errors made by the sixth-semester students of the English Department of in University of Widya Dharma Pontianak. After identifying the errors, it can be seen that there were 531 errors made by the students which related to the use of simple past tense in the translated text. There are four types of errors made by the students. There are addition errors, omission errors, missed ordering errors and missed formation errors. The addition errors include the addition of to-be (was/were), -ed/-d, another verb, and adverb. The omission errors include the omission of –ed/-d, to-be (was/were), verb, conjunction and preposition. The missed ordering errors include the missed ordering of subject and to-be (was/were), to-be and adverb, adverb in a sentence, and noun phrase. The missed formation errors include the missed formation of to-be (was/were), regular verb, irregular verb, modal auxiliaries and time signals. In percentages, the highest percentage error is the most frequently missed formation error with a percentage of 54.4 %. Next is the addition errors 15.6 %, the omission errors 19.1 % and the missed ordering errors 10.9 %. The results of the error analysis showed that some students do not understand enough about the grammatical rules, especially in the simple past tense. Besides that, some of them found it difficult to find the appropriate words or phrases to be used in the translated text. Based on those factors, the researcher would like to provide some suggestions for the lecturer and the students. After knowing the kinds of errors made by the students, the lecturer should pay more attention to the students' ability in translation. The lecturer could have to have a review about simple past tense and grammatical rules of both source language and target language so that the students can apply those well in their translation learning. The lecturer also needs to improve the way of teaching and take the students errors as part of the teaching material so that the students could get feedbacks and could learn from the error that they produced. For students, they should practice more especially in translating narrative text. They

need to be aware of the grammatical rules that are used in the simple past tense. Besides that, they need to be more focused on translating to avoid translation errors.

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