

## Grammatical accuracy of Indonesian-English translation

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**Abstract** - This study aimed at investigating the accuracy of grammatical structures made by EFL students and their perception of factors affecting them to translate Indonesian texts into English grammatically. The subjects of the study were 21 students in an Indonesian-English Translation class at Language and Literature Faculty, Universitas Sains Alqur'an Wonosobo, Indonesia. The data were collected through students' translation result texts, questionnaires, and interviews. Since the data involve social phenomena the qualitative approach is used to interpret the data. The findings indicate that the major inaccurate grammatical structures made by students are noun phrase structure, passive voice, and usage of tenses. EFL students consider that factors that contribute to helping them translate texts grammatically are lecturers' grammar class, watching English movies, and frequent translating exercises. With regard to Indonesian-English translation, this study is believed to ensure the teachers to design an appropriate course to serve the students to develop their grammatical performance in translation.

**Keywords:** grammatical translation, translation accuracy, grammatical accuracy, grammatical problems, translation problems

## 1. Introduction

This research was raised based on my reflection in Indonesian-English translation class at English Literature Study Program, Language and Literature Faculty, Universitas Sains Alqur'an (Unsiq) Wonosobo. In addition, the students of this class needed to perform their ability to translate various topics from Indonesian texts into English. Translation needs particular skills to grasp not only meaning but also structures of the source language in order to translate texts well into the target language. Nord (2005) stated that it all can too often happen that the sender's intention has not been realized successfully in the text (especially if the sender is not the text producer). Related to this statement, it is better to reduce such kind of mistake translation through some procedures.

Newmark (1988) proposed that (interpreters, translators, or senders) have to consider the quality of the writing and the authority of the text, two critical factors in the choice of translation method. Furthermore, Liz and Lemanka (in Piatkowska & Okonska, 2013) stated "... students to become familiar with translation process ... focus on proper styles of writing and grammatical structure". The importance of lexical level in translation is also stated in previous articles of translation method which is written by Putranti (2018) who revealed that when an SL text is literally translated into another language, in which there is a wide lexical gap, there would be a lot of missing information in the target language. Therefore, to keep the study, in this research, the researcher focuses on the quality of translation writing, particularly in grammatical accuracy.

Grammar was considered important in translation because of some reason. Larson (1998; Aryaningsoh & Santika, 2008; Utami & Hikmaharyanti, 2019; Khairani, 2019) stated that each language has its own division of lexicon into classes, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. Furthermore, he explained that different languages will have different classes and subclasses. Related to grammar construction, Szymanska (in Pawlak, 2011) argued that incoherence or at least awkwardness seems likely to have resulted if the translators overlook the case of syntactic patterns. In fact, many students have problems to translate Indonesian-English texts. Initially, they often lack awareness in analyzing subjects, verbs, and adverbs of sentences in source texts so that the translation products are not accurate (Choliludin, 2005).

To avoid misunderstanding, the term grammar in this article is in line with Baker (1997) who refers to grammar to morphology and syntax dimensions. Frank (1972) stated that the main grammar divisions are the subject and the predicate. Furthermore, He explained that subject is who or what is being talked about, and a predicate is what is being said about the subject. Therefore, Roberts (2011) illustrated that you cannot write "Stream old Sam sunbathed beside a" instead "Old Sam sunbathed beside a stream". Morphology in this paper refers to grammar areas concerned with word structures and relationships between words (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002) While syntax concerns with the study of structuring phrases and sentences out of words (Radford, 2004).

In submitted assignments, some students indicated that they did not include grammatical rules in their translation products. It reflected that they had problems

with grammar in writing. I found this fact after some sentences were translated as displayed in table 1.

Table 1 Ungrammatical Translation Products Conducted by Students

Source Language	Target Language
Studi akademis terhadap Alqur'an telah dilakukan oleh banyak sarjana di Jerman sejak abad ke-19.	The academic study of alqur'an have conducted by many bachelor in German since 19th century. The academic study of alqur'an is studied by a lot of bachelors in Germany since 19 century.
Pendekatan dan metode tersebut tidak dapat disebutkan secara rinci	The approachments and methods cannot be mentioned The approaches and methods cannot be in detail

From the translation above, it was identified that subject-verb agreement, passive voice, quantifier-noun agreement, noun forming, tense aspects, and missing finite verb were various grammatical errors made. And those were only a few samples that demonstrated constraints faced by students in writing their translation products into English. Based on some pre-findings, the researcher questioned himself, and then contemplated what he could do to help the students to enrich their awareness toward grammar roles in translation. The researcher expected that this research can help the students to reduce their grammatical problems in transferring Indonesian texts into English so that they are able to construct a good translation product. Furthermore, the research was also expected to give benefits to the translation teacher to raise students' skills in translating texts from Indonesia into the English language.

## 2. Method

This study involves texts to be interpreted. Furthermore, the data in this research are gained from social phenomena. Therefore, the qualitative approach whose purpose is to investigate the factors helping the students to translate Indonesian-English texts grammatically is considered to be used. It is in accordance with Neuman (2000) who stated that qualitative researchers often rely on interpretation.

### 2.1 Population

The study engaged 21 students, the fourth semester, in an Indonesian-English Translation class (class B) academic year 2017/2018. Furthermore, they were students in the English Literature Study Program, Language and Literature Faculty of Universitas Sains Alqur'an (Unsiq) Wonosobo, who had taken basic, intermediate, and advanced courses (grammar) lectures in their previous semester. With regard to translation, they had gotten the theory of translation in the third semester. For those reasons, they were considered to be able to write translation products grammatically. Therefore, they were hoped that they were able to take into consideration the factors contributing to help them translate grammatically.

### 2.2 Materials

First of all, the students were given an Indonesian text which would be translated into English. To get natural research sources, i.e. constraints faced by the students to translate translation materials grammatically. In this step, the researcher did not give them any explanation that their translation products were going to be analyzed.

Secondly, a questionnaire was provided to ask students' responses toward factors which contributed to helping them write translation product grammatically. The questionnaire was in the Indonesian language. It was done to ensure that the students understood the questionnaire materials clearly.

In the last section, some questions were proposed to interview the students. The interview section was conducted to support and deepen information revealed from the questionnaire section. This type of interview was believed to reflect students' perceptions particularly related to factors affecting students in translating texts grammatically. In this chance, the interview was conducted in the Indonesian language to get deep and rich information.

### 2.3 Data Collection

To grasp the problems faced by students, initially, the researcher collected students' translation result texts. Unfortunately, the translation texts which were gathered are 19 from 21 students. Then, he preceded the questionnaires step to ask students' responses. And the last, he did the interview section. In the interview, he used interview instruction to deepen information. There were three students who made fewer mistakes and those students were questioned in the interview section to reflect class problems in sense of grammatical accuracy.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Students' translation products and interviews which were in written forms were analyzed using content analysis. Eventually, in this study, he analyzed student's translation texts to convey the problems of grammatical accuracy and interpret the texts of students' written responses. This is in line with Krippendorff (2004) who stated that content analysis, however, has to address prior questions concerning why available texts... what they mean ...". Moreover, this study uses texts to analyze their themes (Weber, 1990).

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section discusses the topic based on the major research questions, namely grammatical constraints faced by students in Indonesian-English translation, and factors contributing to writing Indonesian-English translation grammatically. Then, each theme will be divided into sub-theme as the research findings.

### 3.1. Grammatical Problems Faced by EFL Students in Indonesian-English Translation

In conducting grammatical accuracy, the data revealed that the students faced some problems. The grammar problems faced by the students involved in some aspects. Those are figured out in table 2.

Table 2 Grammar Problems Faced by Students in Indonesian-English Translation

No	Problems	F	%
1	Quantifier-Noun Agreement	16	5,46
2	Passive Voice	39	13,3
3	Noun Phrase	149	50,8
4	Subject-Verb Agreement	14	4,77
5	Missing Verb	5	1,70
6	Tense Aspects	22	7,50
7	Adjective Clause (AC) and Reducing AC	8	2,73

8	Possessive Pronoun	9	3,07
9	Preposition	16	5,46
10	Gerund	2	0,68
11	Adverb	6	2,04
12	Infinitive	4	1,36
13	Pronoun Subject	1	0,3
14	Missing Subject	1	0,3
15	Adjective	1	0,3
	Total	293	100%

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Number, %: Percentage

Based on the data above, the students got many problems to maintain the accuracy of grammar in translating Indonesian texts into English. There were 293 grammar problems faced by 19 students. Grammatical problems distributed in fifteen kinds. Then, the most problematic grammar accuracy made by the students was a noun phrase (50.8%), and the last occurrence was the pronoun subject (0.3%), missing subject (0.3%), and adjective (0.3%).

In this study, the selected types of grammatically accurate problems were restricted only to the highest three of the most frequent occurrences. Those were noun phrases (50.8%), passive voice (13.3%), and tense aspects (7.5%). All of the three findings were presented and then discussed. To make clear, initially, the source language is presented on the left side of columns, then the extracted data are put in the middle of the columns, and the possible corrections are placed on the right side.

### 3.1.1 Noun Phrase

The grammatical accuracy problem which was mostly occurred in Indonesian-English translation products made by students was a noun phrase. Most students reflected that they replaced adjective forms with noun forms in a noun phrases, missed the article as modifiers of a noun, and misunderstood another and the other usage.

Table 3 Grammatical Accuracy of Indonesian-English Translation in Noun Phrase

No	Source Language	Target Language	Correction of Target Language
1	Studi <b>kritik</b> historis Alqur'an	Alqur'an historical <b>criticism</b> study	The historical <b>critical</b> study of the Qur'an
2	Studi <b>akademik</b> terhadap Alqur'an	<b>Academic</b> study on Al qur'an	<b>The academic</b> study of the Qur'an
3	<b>banyak</b> sarjana <b>yang lain</b>	<b>the anothers</b> scholars	<b>many other</b> scholars

As depicted in table 3, EFL students wrote inaccurate grammatical structures concerning noun phrases. In data extract 1, instead, the students translated “kritik” in Indonesia as source language which functions as an adjective, modifying noun, to be “critical”, they translated the word to be “criticism” in English as the target language. In fact, criticism is a noun form. Swan (1995) explained that many adjectives end in -ic and -ical, some of the words ended in -ical such as critical. Even though a noun in some cases is able to modify a noun (as a classifier), in this case, “kritik” prefers to function as an adjective, so in this particular case the structure of this noun phrase will be “determiner + epithet1 + epithet2 + noun + preposition + determiner + noun”.

Then the students translated the Indonesian word “akademik” to be “academic” as found in data 2. The students wrote inaccurate a noun phrase since the noun phrase did not involve determiner (precisely article) while determiner is a clue that the following word will be a noun. The structure of this noun phrase should be “determiner + epithet + noun + preposition + determiner + noun.

Finally, the students wrote inappropriate structures in their translation as seen in the case of the another which was translated from “banyak sarjana yang lain”. It reflects that the use of another and other needs certain considerations. The students looked improper to add “s” at the end of another and to put them in front of another. The students made double errors which impacted the result of translation products. For readers of this translation product, of course, they tend to misunderstand the point as the meaning of the source language was not transferred well in the target language. The translation of “banyak sarjana yang lain” prefers to be translated “as many other scholars”.

### 3.1.2 Passive Voice

Related to passive voice, students were less careful to write the appropriate grammar in translating Indonesian texts into English. Most of them paid less attention in sense of writing “be” and “past participle” forms as the prominent elements of structuring passive voice.

Table 4 Grammatical Accuracy of Indonesian-English Translation in Passive Voice

No	Source Language	Target Language	Correction of Target Language
4	Pendekatan dan metode tersebut <b>tidak dapat disebutkan</b> secara rinci	Those approachments and methods <i>can not detail mention</i>	The approaches and methods <i>cannot be mentioned</i> in detail
5	Penelitian semacam ini <b>telah dilakukan</b> oleh para sarjana Barat sejak abad ke-19	This type of reseach <i>has been</i> by western scholars by Western scholars since 19th century	Such kind of research <i>has been carried out</i> by Western scholars since the 19th century
6	Studi akademis terhadap al-Qur’an <b>telah dilakukan</b> oleh banyak sarjana	The academic study of Qur’an <i>have conducted</i> by many bachelors	The academic study of the Qur’an <i>has been done</i> by many scholars

As reflected in table 4, the students wrote inaccurate grammar to translate passive voice in the target language. The verb phrases which should make passive meaning cannot be understood well because of unstructured forming (cannot mention, has been, have conducted) in data extract 4, 5, and 6. The construction of passive verb phrases in the source language is “tidak dapat disebutkan”, “telah dilakukan” and, “telah dilakukan”. In a “passive” sentence, the subject receives the action (Pyle & Munoz, 1991). Verb phrase (data 4), cannot mention, indicates that this phrase needs an object as mention intransitive verbs in line with Finegan (2014) stating that the verb that takes a noun is called transitive. While the subject of the sentence of this verb is the agent and cannot receive the action, the use of passive voice in this sentence is considered appropriate as the agent does not exist. In data 5, the test measures the information to the readers that such kind of research is pointed out. This is in accordance with Side and Wellman (2000) stating that one of the reasons for using passive voice is factual writing whose focus is usually on events... rather than

agents. Data 6 demonstrates that the students had a problem to construct a passive voice, precisely fewer forms of be. Structuring has conducted in passive forms is inappropriate, so that the possible correction suggests have been conducted to replace that incorrect form.

### 3.1.3 Tenses

Inappropriate grammar accuracy also appears in aspects of tenses. Even though the time signals (in past times) indicate that the tenses should belong to particular tenses, some students were still difficult to write the correct tense forms. The data are presented in table 5.

Table 5 Grammatical Accuracy of Indonesia-English Translation in Tenses

No	Source Language	Target Language	Correction of Target Language
7	Pada tahun 1883 ia <b>menerbitkan</b> sebuah buku	In 1883 he <b>publishes</b> a book	In 1883 he <b>published</b> a book
8	Studi akademis terhadap al-Qur'an <b>telah dilakukan</b> oleh banyak sarjana sejak abad ke-19	The academic study of the Al Qur'an <b>was research</b> by many scholars in Germany since 19th century	The academic study of the Qur'an <b>has been done</b> by many scholars in Germany since 19th century
9	Penelitian semacam ini <b>telah dilakukan</b> oleh para sarjana Barat sejak abad ke-19	Research like this <b>was did</b> by Academician of West since 19th century	Such kind of research <b>has been carried out</b> by Western scholars since the 19th century

As shown in table 5, data 7 illustrates that the students did not consider the time signal in 1883 consequently they are not able to order correct grammatical forms in sense of tenses. The finite verb in the translation product actually should be written down in a past form therefore it should be published and not publishes. Since the verb, publishes, demonstrates that the sentence is present tense. Data (8 and 9) report that the students made translation errors related to tenses. Both show that the tenses should be present perfect tenses. The indication is reflected well from time signals i.e. since the 19th century. Therefore, the translation of was research and was did would be possible better corrected with has been done and has been carried out.

### 3.2 Factors Contributing Students to Write Indonesian-English Translation Grammatically

In this discussion, the study presents 21 questionnaire responses related to EFL students' perceptions toward factors that help them write translation products accurately in grammatical rules. Furthermore, the responses concern ten classifications, namely lecturers' grammar class, studying grammar with friends, speaking English with friends, translation result discussion, peer correction, peer feedback, lecturers' feedback, studying routinely, frequent translating exercises, watching English movies. The numbers and percentage of related factors are depicted in table 6.

Table 6 Students' Perception toward Factors Helping Them Write Translation Products Grammatically

No	The factors	F	%
1	Lecturer's grammar class	13	9,36

2	Studying grammar with friends	4	2,88
3	Speaking English with friends	5	3,6
4	Translation result discussion	9	6,48
5	Peer correction	2	1,44
6	Peer feedback	2	1,44
7	Lecturers' feedback	9	6,48
8	Studying routinely	5	3,6
9	Frequent translating exercises	11	7,92
10	Watching English movies	12	8,64
	Total	72	100%

Note: f: Number, %: Percentage

Based on the extract data above, research findings reveal some prominent factors that are able to develop students' translation products in a sense of grammatical accuracy. The discussion presents those three major factors based on students' perception, namely lecturers' grammar class (9.36%), watching English movies (8.64%), and frequent translating exercises (7.92%). The data then is revealed from the interview section.

### 3.2.1 Lecturers' Grammar Classes

As depicted in table 6, lecturers' grammar class is the highest frequent element which is cited by the students. All most of the students confess that lecturers' grammar class is able to develop their grammatical understanding that influences their grammatical accuracy in translation products. This category is also revealed based on students' responses from interviews (I). The student (S) admits that "We can take some benefit from grammar classes held by lecturers. Among the many benefits, we can get is how to compose phrases, sentences, and clauses because the structure of the Indonesian language is different from English" (S.1/I.1). This is also strengthened by other student's responses stating that "Because when we learn grammar, we know how to translate texts from the source language into the target language. If our grammar is good the results of the translation will also be good" (S.2/I.1).

Based on students' responses, it is concluded that they are able to take some advantages from grammar classes. They seem to understand how to construct phrases, sentences, and clauses. Structuring the phrase, sentences, and clauses correctly will impact translation products as well.

### 3.2.2 Watching English Movies

Another prominent element based on the students' response is watching English movies. It seems that most of the students admit that they are able to take some advantages through watching English movies which influences their translation in sense of knowing the contextual meaning since it is strongly influenced by its time or particular contexts. It is relevant to students' interview response who argues that "we become aware of how language is used in certain contexts" (S.1/I.6). It strengthens another student who states that watching English films improves my ability to write English translations (S.3/I.4).

### 3.2.3 Frequent Translating Exercises

From the interview section, the students indicate that frequent translating exercises take an important role in developing their ability to write translation products in an accurately grammatical form. It is in accordance with students' response (S.1/I.4) who states that "by getting used to practising translating, we will be able to translate well".



Another student believes that a translation exercise positively influenced her translation ability. Specifically, she argues “every week the lecturer gives translation exercises, in the translation process, in my opinion, the process helps my capability to translate” (S.3/I.4).

#### 4. Conclusion

Write your conclusions and suggestion here Based on the findings, twenty-one (21) EFL students in the Indonesian-English translation class of Language and Literature Faculty of Unsiq Wonosobo, wrote 293 inaccurate grammatical items in their translation products. Those inappropriate constructions are categorized to be fifth teens and the three mostly occurrences are noun phrases, passive voice, and tenses.

Regarding inaccurate noun phrase constructions, the students tend to fail to translate Indonesian into English texts in adjective forms, missing of articles, and using another. With regard to translating passive voice, the students write finite verb forms not in past participle forms, miss finite verbs, and miss be forms. With regard to translating tense aspects, the students fail to transfer the appropriate texts in accordance with their time which influences finite forms. Such as, the students translate the source language which is in past time into simple present tense in target language even though the time signals in past time are presented. The study strengthens Rofik’s and Sahid’s (2019) research findings that stated that students of Unsiq had tense problems in English.

Furthermore, the three primary factors affecting writing Indonesian-English translation based on EFL student’s perception are lectures’ grammar classes, watching English movies, and frequent translating exercises. Then, precise percentages of EFL students’ perception successively are lecturing grammar class (9.36%), watching English movies (8.64%), and frequent translating exercises (7.92%).

Following up on the results, this study proposes some possible translation teaching related to grammatical problems. Firstly, the lectures would likely notice that grammar is important in translation. This research seems likely to strengthen Liz and Lemanka (in Piatkowska & Okonska, 2013), and Szymanska (in Pawlak, 2011). It means that the lecturers need to have a grammatical correction time to enhance the quality of translation products conducted by the students. On this occasion, the lecturers can identify the errors, evaluate them, and correct them with students in the class. Secondly, it is essential that the lecturers provide enough exercises in translation to encourage the students to translate source language to target language texts precisely. Considering the findings of this study perhaps the lecturers need to raise the students’ need for grammatical competence in translation so that the students are able to improve their grammatical accuracy in translation.

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