



## **ERROR ANALYSIS ON INDONESIAN TO CHINESE TRANSLATION OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS**

### **ANALISIS KESALAHAN KARYA TERJEMAHAN PELAJAR INDONESIA DARI BAHASA INDONESIA KE BAHASA MANDARIN**

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#### **Abstract**

As China and Indonesia have developed stronger partnership in economics and business, the demand for Chinese-Indonesian bilinguals is increasing. Higher education institutions should answer this demand by providing proficient bilinguals, who would provide a fine translation work. In the process of translation, the translator is demanded to transfer the content from source language (SL) into target language (TL), while obeying the structure of the TL itself. In the process of translating from L1 to L2, the translator might not have problems in understanding the information presented in the SL text, which is his/her L1, but might have difficulties in transferring the information into the TL text, which is his/her L2, especially if the translator him/herself has not reached a high level of L2 proficiency. To understand the difficulties of acquiring L2 and producing fine translation in L2, the writer would conduct an error analysis in the learners' translation works. The participants of this research are Chinese department's senior students. The purpose of this research is to find out the influence of learners' L1 in L1 to L2 translation, define the causes and thus provide suggestion on how to minimize the negative transfer of L1 in the translation learning process.

**Keywords:** *Translation, Second Language Acquisition, Error Analysis, Chinese Language Learning*

#### **Abstrak**

Seiring dengan perkembangan hubungan ekonomi dan bisnis antara Tiongkok dan Indonesia, permintaan terhadap dwibahasawan Mandarin dan Indonesia juga ikut meningkat. Institusi pendidikan tinggi harus menjawab tantangan ini dengan menyediakan dwibahasawan yang handal, yang mampu menghasilkan karya terjemahan yang berkualitas. Dalam proses penerjemahan, penerjemah dituntut untuk mengalihbahasakan isi dari bahasa sumber ke bahasa sasaran, dengan mematuhi kaidah bahasa

sasaran. Dalam proses penerjemahan dari bahasa pertama (B1) ke bahasa kedua (B2), penerjemah tidak akan mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami teks dalam bahasa sumber, tetapi kemungkinan akan mengalami kesulitan saat mengalihbahasakan teks tersebut ke dalam bahasa sasaran, yang merupakan B2, terutama jika penerjemah belum memiliki kemahiran B2 yang memadai. Untuk memahami kesulitan pembelajar dalam menguasai bahasa kedua dan menghasilkan karya terjemahan yang bermutu dalam B2, penulis akan melakukan analisis kesalahan pada karya terjemahan para pembelajar. Objek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tingkat akhir program studi bahasa Mandarin. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan pengaruh B1 pembelajar terhadap proses penerjemahan dari B1 ke B2, mencari penyebab kesalahan dan memberikan masukan mengenai cara untuk meminimalisir transfer negatif dari B1 ke B2 dalam proses pembelajaran penerjemahan.

*Kata Kunci: Penerjemahan, Pemerolehan bahasa Kedua, Analisis Kesalahan, Pembelajaran bahasa Mandarin*

## A. INTRODUCTION

As Indonesia and Chinese have developed a stronger relationship in economics and business partnership, the demand on Indonesian and Chinese bilinguals are increasing. Therefore the education institutions have to prepare the upcoming professional to be tranquil in translating from Chinese to Indonesian and vice versa, in written and oral form. However, in the process of producing a good translation, errors' production is an undeniable learning process. The difficulties faced by learners while translating from L1 to L2 is different from translating from L2 to L1. In the process of translating from L1 to L2, one of the biggest problems would be learners' difficulty in transferring the source language text into an equivalent target language translation. The learners should possess a high level of proficiency of L2 in order to produce a fine translation in target language.

Identifying learners' errors had been widely known as one of the ways to understand learners' difficulties in acquiring a second language. Therefore, by identifying learners' errors in translation, the facilitator/language researcher could understand learners' difficulties in producing a fine translation. In the process of language learning, there are positive and negative transfers from learners L1 to L2. These positive and negative transfers could not be hindered in the process of translating from L1 to L2.

Lado (1957) argued that positive and negative transfers do exist in the process of acquiring a second language. The elements in L2 that are similar to L1 are easier to learn, and thus the production of errors might be less, therefore it was known as positive transfer. Whereas the elements in L2 that are different from L1, might trigger the production of errors in L2, and was known as negative transfer.

Corder (1967) mentioned that learners' errors could assist the language teacher/facilitator to understand the process of second language acquisition, and thus could provide information and suggestion needed in the curriculum design, and thus he

initiated error analysis. Learners' mistakes could be divided into mistakes and errors, mistakes happened coincidentally, while errors is systematic and happened because of learners' misunderstanding on certain linguistic features. By identifying and analyzing the causes of learners' errors, the facilitator could understand learners' difficulties in acquiring the second language, thus result in a more effective curriculum design.

Corder (1974) initiated the six steps in conducting error analysis, which includes collecting data, differentiating mistakes and errors, confirming errors, and defining types of errors, finding out the causes of errors, and analyzing errors. As error analysis had been widely used and developed, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) mentioned that there are four types of errors:

1. Misinformation/ Over-generalization  
Which is caused by learner's misunderstanding on certain linguistic feature of L2.
2. Addition  
On which the learner has added certain linguistic feature on L2.
3. Omission  
On which the learner has omitted certain linguistic feature on L2.
4. Misordering  
The language that is produced by the learner does not fit the syntactic feature of L2.

From Dulay et al (1986) classification on learners' errors, we could conclude that errors were caused by learners' inadequacy on L2 syntactic and communicative feature, and thus led to the production of inaccurate L2 output. Word-order patterns fulfill the syntactic, semantic and communicative functions in languages. The semantic, syntactic and communicative features are important elements in understanding source language text, transferring and producing a fine translation, therefore a good translator should understand, transfer and reconstruct the word order of SL text into TL text.

Mona Baker (1992) stated that the tension between the languages with relatively free word order would be less compared to the languages with relatively fixed word order. Therefore, a number of linguists suggested variety of strategies in reducing the tension between SL and TL syntactic and communicative feature, such as voice change, which is changing the syntactic form a verb; change of verb, by replacing a verb with one that is lexically similar and could be applied in a different syntactic configuration; nominalization, which is replacing a verbal form with a nominal form; extra-position, which is changing the position of the entire clause in the sentence.

As Nord (2005) mentioned that the process of translation has exceeded the cognitive level of acquisition phase, on which the translator does not only function as a translating machine that could be objectively quantified, but requires translator's imagination, talent and receptivity process. Therefore, it is important to highlight the relationship between the linguistic unit and its referents, the purposes for which sentences are used, and the fact on which the individual components relate to one another and form a cohesive whole, as House (1997) argued that the main goal in

translation is the pursuit of equivalence, which includes equivalence in semantic, pragmatic and textual aspects.

Language is not an isolated phenomenon, as Snell-Hornby (1995) mentioned that language is culture-bound, therefore implementing the systemic-functional grammar perspective is beyond understanding the linguistic structure of a sentence, but focusing on the theme and rheme, thematic progression and information transferring from SL to TL text.

Rizzato (2015) mentioned that functional grammar helps trainee translators to understand that grammar is a system to create meaning where numerous of options are available, and choices are made based on the text and speaker's purposes. The translator has to make his choices not limited to the grammatical structure of a language, but also to the communicative environment.

The purpose of this study is to define the errors made by Indonesian-speaking learners in Chinese translation class, and to find out whether these errors were caused by learners' L1 negative transfer. Defining learners' errors in translation class could assist the teacher/researcher in understanding Indonesian-speaking learners' difficulties in acquiring Chinese as a second language, and thus to identify learners' difficulties in producing a fine translation from L1 (Indonesian) to L2 (Chinese). The aim of this study could be achieved by answering the questions raised on this research: (1) What are the types of errors found in Indonesian-speaking learners from Indonesian (L1) to Chinese (L2) translation? (2) What are the causes of these errors? (3) What are the strategies needed to minimize Indonesian to Chinese translation errors?

## B. METHODS

The participants of this research are Chinese department students in an X University (pseudonym) in Java, Indonesia. There are 9 students involved in this research, and all of them are Indonesian native speakers, and had been learning Chinese for more than three years, and were taking translation class as part of their fourth year study in University.

**Table 1.**

Translation Error Codes (adapted from Dagneaux et al., 1996)

	<b>Types of Error</b>	<b>Error Code</b>
1	Misinformation/Over-generalization	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misuse of Verb Using a non-equivalent verbal form; using a non-verbal form, i.e. a nominal or an adverbial form as a predicate of a sentence/clause.</li> <li>• Misuse of Noun Using a non-equivalent nominal form; using a non-nominal form, i.e. a verbal or an adjectival form as a subject/object of a sentence.</li> <li>• Misuse of Adverb Using a syntactically incorrect adverbial form.</li> </ul>	<p>MUV</p> <p>MUN</p> <p>MUV</p>

2	Addition	AD
3	Misordering	MO
Producing a structurally incorrect target language text.		

The methodology used in this research is Error Analysis, on which the Indonesian to Chinese translation of the participants would be identified, classified and analyzed by using Error Analysis. The source language text is a narrative text, and the participants were given 100 minutes to translate Indonesian narrative text into Chinese. The participants were allowed to make use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. The errors collected in this research would be classified into several types as shown in table 1.

### C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### *Classification of Errors*

After sorting out the coincidental mistakes made by the learners, the number of the errors being used in this research is 76 errors, on which all of these errors originated from nine learners participated in this research.

Adapting from Dagneaux et al (1996), the errors produced by this research's participants are classified as follow:

**Table 2.**

Types of Errors

	Error Code	Number of	
		Errors	Percentage
Misuse of Noun, Verb, and Adverb	MU	58	76.32
Misordering	MO	16	21.05
Addition	AD	2	2.63
Total number of errors		76	100

The classification above shows us that 76.32% of the errors are misinformation errors, on which the learners misused the nominal, verbal and adverbial form in the target language text, whereas the number of misordering errors is 21.05%. These findings showed us that the learners still have difficulties in transferring L1 text into a structurally and functionally equivalent L2 text.

#### *Error Analysis and Causes of Errors*

Since most of the errors found in this research are misinformation and misordering errors, the writer would identify and analyze the types and causes of these two types of errors. The addition type of errors would not be analyzed in this research, since it constructed only 2.63% of the total errors found in this research.

**Misinformation Errors**

Since most of the errors are misinformation errors, the writer classified the misinformation errors into a more detailed classification to identify the causes of misinformation errors, as shown in table 3.

The number of nominal form misuse errors is 32.89%, whereas misuse of verbal form errors is 30.26%. This significant numbers showed that most of the errors produced by participants are due to learners' inadequate capacity on L2 structural and functional grammar. The learner tended to translate lexically, word by word, without restructuring the TL text into an appropriate TL grammatical structure. This number also showed that though the learners were using dictionary, but most of them did not maximize the function of a dictionary, by only checking the equivalence of each SL word/morpheme, and thus did not consider the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic function of the TL word/morpheme.

**Table 3.**  
Classification of Misinformation Errors

	<b>Error Code</b>	<b>Number of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Misuse of Noun	MUN	25	32.89
Misuse of Verb	MUV	23	30.26
Misuse of Adverb	MUA	10	13.16
Total number of misuse errors		58	76.32

As in misuse of nominal form errors, some errors are caused by learners' word by word translation, as shown by the following example:

*Data 1*

MUN-8	用他黑的科学, 那个菩萨对 Putri Kandita 他的母亲施以法术*
SL Text	Dengan ilmu hitam yang dimiliki, dukun itu menyihir Putri Kandita dan ibunya ...

The participants use 黑的科学 "hei de kexue" to translate the Indonesian noun phrase "ilmu hitam" (red: black magic in English), on which 黑 "hei" means black, whereas 科学 "kexue" means science. According to *Kamus lengkap Indonesia Tionghoa* (2000), the Chinese equivalence of "ilmu hitam" is 邪恶法术 "xie-e fashu".

*Data 2*

MUN-9	从他跟皇后的结婚出生了一个女儿叫Kandita 公主*
MUN-20	从他的结婚生了一个女孩儿叫Putri Kandita*
SL Text	Dari hasil perkawinannya dengan sang permaisuri lahirlah seorang putri yang bernama Putri Kandita.

The errors above showed that two of the participants were using the verbal form 结婚 “jiehun”, instead of the nominal form 婚姻 “hunyun” to translate the noun phrase “pernikahan”. The errors above showed that the learners had not mastered the TL grammatical structure well, on which the verbal form is used as a subject of clause, and the learners did not applied any translation strategy, on which the learners’ could adapt the semantic form of a phrase into different voice or different grammatical form in TL text. Misuse of noun is also shown in the following sentence:

*Data 3*

MUN-11	一会儿他们的见面变成安静*
SL Text	Sejenak, suasana pertemuan itu menjadi hening.

In above errors, 见面 “jianmian” is a verbal form, which means “to meet”, the equivalent translation of meeting is 会议 “huiyi” or 聚会 “juhui” which is a nominal form, means “meeting”.

The above findings showed us that the misuse of noun was mostly caused by learners’ misuse of TL (Chinese) nominal form and misuse of other grammatical form as a noun phrase. The misuse of verbal form also contributed a significant number of errors found in this research, as shown in the following sentences:

*Data 4*

MUV-12	他们都重想找正确的方法为可以进行无知Prabu Siliwangi*
SL Text	Semuanya sedang <b>berpikir keras untuk mencari cara yang paling tepat agar rencana mereka dapat terlaksana tanpa sepengetahuan Prabu Siliwangi.</b>

The above sentence showed that the learners translated “berpikir keras” word by word into 重想 “zhongxiang” which actually does not exist in any Chinese lexis. 重想 “zhongxiang” consists of two features, 重 “zhong” means heavy or hard, 想 “xiang” means “to think”. There are many options of words to translate “berpikir keras”, such as Chinese idioms 沉思默想 “chen si mo xiang” which means “to think hard”. And the verb phrase “mencari cara yang paling tepat agar rencana mereka dapat terlaksana tanpa sepengetahuan Prabu Siliwangi” was also translated word by word, and thus did not correspond with Chinese word order, as in “找正确的方法为可以进行无知 Prabu Siliwangi”. Details are as follow:

找	正确的方法	为可以进行	无知Prabu Siliwangi
Mencari	cara yang tepat	agar terlaksana	tanpa sepengetahuan Prabu

The above translation showed us that in translating, the translator does not only need to find the equivalent word, but also need to construct the word into a syntactically and pragmatically correct sentences. The above SL text could be translated into “他们都想着如何于Prabu无知的情况下进行他们的计划。”. The other verbal form misuse errors caused by learners’ lack of strategy could be seen in following example:

*Data 5*

MUV-18	如果 Prabu 知道了这个计划，我们一定 <b>毁灭</b> *
SL Text	Kita harus berhati-hati karena jika Prabu mengetahui rencana ini, maka kita semua akan binasa.

The word 毁灭 is a nominal form and a transitive verb. Since the emphasis of the clause is in the subject “kita” as first person plural pronoun, then the translator need to transfer the information by using the passive voice. Chinese passive voice is marked by the usage of 被 “bei” as in following translation suggestion “如果 Prabu 知道我们这个计划，我们一定会**被毁灭**。”

**Misordering Errors**

Misordering errors constructed 21.05% of the total errors found in this research. The misordering errors are as follow:

*Data 6*

MO-2	Prabu Siliwangi <b>很惊讶地看</b> 公主和皇后同时得了这个病
SL Text	Prabu Siliwingi <b>heran melihat</b> penyakit borok itu tiba-tiba menyerang putri dan permaisurinya secara bersamaan.

The learners translated “heran melihat” into 很惊讶地看 “hen jingya de kan”, 惊讶 “jingya” is an adjective, which means “perplexed”, whereas 看 “kan” is a verb means “to see”. The above data showed us that the learner translated SL text into TL text word by word, and thus did not adapt to the TL semantic and syntactic feature.

*Data 7*

MO-5	当时他已经成人， <b>明智和英明的典型父亲对自己已经出现， ...</b> *
SL Text	Ketika Ia mulai dewasa, <b>sifat arif dan bijaksana seperti yang dimiliki oleh sang ayah mulai muncul pada dirinya, ...</b>



In MO-5, the learner translated “sifat arif dan bijaksana seperti yang dimiliki oleh sang ayah mulai muncul pada dirinya” word by word and thus resulted in a syntactically inappropriate sentence as in 明智和英明的典型父亲对自己已经出现. Details are as follow:

TL Text	SL Text
明智和英明	<b>sifat arif dan bijaksana</b>
的典型父亲	<b>seperti yang dimiliki oleh sang ayah</b>
对自己	<b>pada dirinya</b>
已经出现	<b>mulai muncul</b>

In the above context, the learner could shift the passive voice “dimiliki oleh ayah” into an active voice, and it would make a better and finer Chinese translation as 长大后，公主拥有如她父亲的才智和智慧， which means “As she grew up, she possessed wisdom and knowledge just like her father. In the other context, the learner shifted the passive voice into active but did not construct a syntactically correct translation, as follow:

#### Data 8

MO-16	...因为 <b>如果被皇帝发现这个计划*</b>
SL Text	...karena jika Prabu mengetahui rencana ini

In the SL text, “karena jika Prabu mengetahui rencana ini” is an active voice, however in the learners’ translation “因为如果被皇帝发现这个计划\*” is a passive voice. It is one of the translation strategies needed, however the syntactic feature in the trainee’s translation is incorrect. The learner used 被 “bei” as a passive voice marker, but did not construct the structure of the sentence into a passive voice structure.

Through the errors identified in this research, we found out that some of the misordering errors also included verbal form or nominal form misuse errors. It signified that learners still need to equip themselves with a holistic comprehension of L2 structural and functional grammar. And thus learning to implement the translation strategy to produce a finer and more communicative translation.

#### D. CONCLUSION

The classification and analysis of the learners’ translation errors showed that most of the errors were caused by learners’ L1 negative transfer. A large number of the errors produced showed that the learned had not possessed a high level of acquisition in L2 structural and functional grammar. Therefore the learners tended to misused L2 lexis and morphemes, and did not construct their translation into a syntatically correct L2

sentence. Moreover, most of the learners' had not mastered the translation strategy, therefore they used to make a word by word translation and did not pay attention to the communicative transferring of a text.

Learners' translation strategy need to be trained in the translation class, however before entering a translation class, a learner should at least possess a certain level of L2 proficiency. As the learners gained certain level of proficiency, the challenges they face in producing a fine translation would be finding equivalent phrases and defining which phrases they would use in their translation, and then constructing a syntactically and functionally communicative text.

As the demand on Chinese-Indonesians bilinguals are growing, the education institutions should equip the language learners to possess not only proficient communicative skill, but also accomplished translation skill.

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