

## **Errors Analysis of Google Translate: A Case Study of Translation Subject**

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### **Abstract**

In college activities, there are many assignments related to English, both in the form of reading articles and assignments to make translations. In dealing with such assignments, students often depend on the use of GT (Google Translate). GT is one of the most popular MT (Machine Translation) because of its speed in translating and also because of the many languages that can be used as references both as source languages and target languages. GT can translate hundreds of source languages and hundreds of others into target languages in seconds. GT can also translate through photos. In addition to the speed and sophistication of GT, the accuracy of translation must be a special consideration. This study aims to reveal some errors made by GT in translating texts from Indonesian to English as the target language. The sentences translated amounted to 30 sentences taken randomly from various sources on the internet. The data collection method used was participatory observation and documentation. Direct observation was carried out by researchers being directly involved in the collection, especially in checking the translations made by GT. The data analysis method used was Categorization based on the theory of Error Analysis of MT. The results of this study are as follows. From 30 sentences as source data translated by GT, there were 13 GT errors or 43.3%. Of these errors, the most were errors in Incorrect Grammar and Structure as many as 6 errors or 20%. Furthermore, errors in Lexical Error as many as 4 errors or 13.3%. Furthermore, followed by Incoherence translation data which had 2 errors or 6.6% and the last was Extraneous translation as many as 1 error or 3.3%.

*Keywords:* Translation errors, Error analysis, Google Translate, Machine Translation.

### **Introduction**

University students in doing their learning activities especially dealing with their English assignments much depend on the use of MT (Machine Translation). They badly use it without making some corrections or event they think do not read over or check if it is correct or even misleading. This condition is understandable because to check translated material does not only linguistic knowledge but also others such as cultural understanding and so on. Regardless of correctness and equivalence in translation of MT, it works based on approach of statistics. It was invented by Franz-Josef Och. He won DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects) contest in 2003 which was responsible for new military technological advances. He developed statistic translation method for MT in order to be able to translate,

it needed more than one million parallel texts collections in two languages both as a source language and the other is target language. Then they are used to translate texts.

The history Google Translate (GT) begun by the founder of Google, Sergey Brin received a Korean letter from his fan. He didn't understand it, then he translated it with his MT. He was unsatisfied with result of translated text at that time. He felt challenged and this inspired him to develop MT, Google translate. Now it is very sophisticated and even it can translate hundreds target languages within seconds. After more than one decade, It is one of the most successful MT assessed by internet users.

There are some advantages of GT such as 1) You do not need to type. Typing for some persons can be complicated problems especially if he works relate to long document. For the users of GT this can be avoided. Instead of typing you can use your voice, then MT will analyze your voice and then translates to target language you prefer. 2) image translation. When you read a foreign magazine and you do not know the meaning, just photo pages or sentences and upload to GT, it will translate them. This feature is very sophisticated and applicable. 3) You do not need to copy all sentences you want to translate, just block them and automatically pop-up Tap to translate. 4) You want to speak with an expatriate. GT also provided this feature by typing your sentences to the target language you want.

In translating document, GT does not only translate from Indonesia to English and vice versa but it also able to translate hundreds language targets. In this case GT will translate from any source language to English first then it translates it to target languages the users prefer. The references of target languages are the languages which are used by United Nations and European Union. Now it can translate more that hundreds languages. Regardless of this condition, GT does not employ linguist to translate and check translation to target languages, therefore it is normal if there are a lot of complain about the unnaturalness and accuracy of translation.

Since 2016 GT applied a new system. It tries to translate the context sentence rather than word by word translation which is known as a literal translation. GT also tries to map translation. This is done by translating in two ways from source to target languages and vice versa.

Based on Corder, S.P. (1977) There are some types of Errors for Translating Machine in conducting translation from Source Text to Target Text namely:

#### 1. Lexical Error

This error happened because MT failed to choose correct words to convey the meaning in target language. In human translation it caused by lack of vocabulary mastery of translator.

##### a. Incorrect Word Choice

The translating machine system selects the wrong word or phrase to convey meaning to target language but it is inaccurate. For example, ST: *Ia berlari sangat cepat*. Translated to TT: He runs very quick.

##### b. Missing words.

The second type of lexical error is word omission or translated words are omitted.

##### c. Extraneous word

This type of error is contradictive with missing word. In this case the MT adds unnecessary words in target language. This can be seen from following data

ST: *Di negara kita Indonesia, masih kurangnya minat individu dalam mempelajari bahasa isyarat, sehingga jarang terjadi komunikasi dengan orang - orang berkebutuhan khusus.*

TT: In our country Indonesia, there is still a lack of individual interest in learning sign language, so communication with people with special needs is rare.

SG: In our country Indonesia, there is still a lack of individual interest in learning sign language, so communication with special needs is rare. Omit this phrase “with people”

## 2. Syntactic Error

This error is in sentence level. This happens because of relationship among word with others in the sentence. This includes grammar and structure errors.

### a. Incorrect Words order

Words are not arranged in the correct grammar of target language. For example, of position of adjective in Bahasa is different from English. ST: *Rumah kecil itu sangat bersih* translated to TT: House small is very crowded.

### b. Incorrect grammatical Structure in target language.

ST: *Ibu selalu bangun pagi setiap hari*

TT: Mother always **get up** in the morning. The word “*bangun*” translated to “get up” is correct but in TT is mistaken because of it must use Simple Present Tense.

SG: Mother always gets up every day.

### c. Incorrect sentence boundary

The error relates to combination and division of sentences. This error happens because of combination of simple sentence becomes compound sentence. For example,

ST: *Kemarin Ani bangun dan mengerjakan tugas sekolahnya Tengah malam.*

TT: Yesterday Ani got up and doing her school assignment.

At a glance above TT is correct but if we have a look closer it is mistaken. In combining sentence in English the unit of the sentence must be equal or balance because the sentence use conjunction “and”, so it must use the same type of verb.

SG: Yesterday Ani got up and did her school assignment.

## 3. Semantic Error

This error relates to meaning used by TM to convey from source to target language. This error consists of:

### a. Misinterpretation of meaning.

Misinterpretation of meaning from translating Indonesia to English relates to culture and idiom. Body language. For example, “thumb up” has difference meaning form British culture and Indonesia. Other type of misinterpretation almost happens in idiom for example “It rains cat and dog”. It cannot be translated literally.

### b. Loss of meaning: Important nuances and subtleties are lost in the translation.

### c. Incoherence translation: The translated text is illogical or nonsensical.

## 4. Pragmatic Error

### a. Culture misunderstandings

The translation fails to account for cultural differences and context. For example, in Muslim culture kissing daughter on her lips considered not polite, but in Western cultures it is common. So when translating ST: He kissed her daughter on her lips, cannot use literal translation but it must be translated by using adaptation translation process. when a father from western culture, it is a custom that he kisses his daughter on her lips but it will be considered not polite if he does it in the Muslim country (Rudianto, 2023).

### b. Inappropriate register

The translation uses the wrong level of formality, tone and style. Register is how someone uses language differently in different situation to suit the context for communication. For example, when we speak to a child, we will use simple

vocabulary and grammar with informal tone and so on. Yet if we speak to an adult, it depends on many things such as the purpose of a talk, style formal or informal and so on. Register in translation is very important. It can influence accuracy and naturalness of target text.

#### **Key Aspects of Register:**

- **Vocabulary**

Choosing suitable vocabularies based on the situation and subject matter. For example, Vocabularies for children will be different from adult vocabularies. Vocabulary for legal terms also different from other fields. Difference register of a word usually has different meaning. Such as word “sentence” in general English means “*kalimat*” but for Legal register it means “*hukuman*”. The word “labor” in medical English means “*proses persalinan*”.

- **Grammar**

The use of sentence structure varies. It might simple sentence for children and complex sentence to educated adults.

- **Tone**

Tone is the way how a person uses his words to convey his attitude or perspectives. For example, formal, informal, humorous, relax, conversational, angry, sad, friendly and so on.

- **Formality**

- This is a key aspect of register, ranging from very formal for example academic writing, legal documents to very informal such as slang with close friends (Bell, R. T., 1993).

#### **Methodology**

The primary data in this research is taken from students’ translation assignment of faculty of Literature in semester 5. They were assigned to translate online text and they used GT to do that. This research applies participatory observation method where the researcher directly involves in collecting data. In order to get data for analyze, there are some techniques namely as follow:

1. Distributing translation assignment to the students
2. Getting feed-back of assignment. Sorting data
3. Classifying data based on translation errors
4. Drawing percentage of error
5. Making conclusion of the research

This research uses categorization in analyzing data. It means by putting data to the category of translation error and also giving translation suggestion for better translation. There are some abbreviations will be used, namely ST: Source Text, GT: Google Translate and SG: Suggested Translation

After data of the research is collected there are some techniques to analyze them, namely:

1. Sorting repeated data.
2. Eliminating identical data.
3. Classifying based on error of translation
4. Analyzing data.
5. Giving suggested translation.

#### **Finding and Discussion**

1. **Lexical Error**

Lexical error is an error which made by MT in the level of word. This consists of:

- a. Incorrect Word Choice: The system selects the wrong word or phrase to convey meaning. This can be seen from following data:
- ST: *Polisi menangkap pelaku percobaan perampokan yang terjadi di kawasan Sei Ladi, Batam, Kepulauan Riau pada Selasa siang.*
- GT: The police arrested **the perpetrator** of an attempted robbery that occurred in the Sei Ladi area, Batam, Riau Islands on Tuesday (24/9/2024) afternoon
- SG: The police arrested **the suspect** of robbery that occurred in the Sei Ladi area, Batam, Riau Islands on Tuesday afternoon
- ST: *Pertama, penghapusan utang di bidang **UMKM (Usaha Kecil Menengah Mikro)** yang sudah cukup lama untuk para petani, para nelayan kita. Saya kira ini sangat dirasakan sehingga mereka sekarang bisa lebih semangat, lebih aktif kembali," sambungnya*
- GT: First, the debt write-off in the **MSME** (Mikro Small Medium Enterprises) sector that has been quite long for our farmers, our fishermen. I think this is very much felt so that they can now be more enthusiastic, more active again," he continued
- SG: First, the debt write-off in the **SME** (Small Medium Enterprises) sector that has been quite long for our farmers, our fishermen. I think this is very much felt so that they can now be more enthusiastic, more active again," he continued. Between words "small" and "micro" are synonyms so it must be omitted one of them.
- ST: *Menurut Kementerian Dalam Negeri India (MEA), petugas berwenang dari MEA harus dihadirkan ke persidangan pada 18 Maret 2021*
- GT: According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MEA), an authorized officer from the MEA should **be produced** before the court on March 18, 2021
- SG: According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MEA), an authorized officer from the MEA should **be presented** before the court on March 18, 2021
- b. Missing words.  
Omission of words or phrases or untranslated words or phrases. There is no data about missing words or phrased in this article.
- c. Extraneous word: unnecessary words are added.  
The Machine of Translation (MT) gives some unnecessary words or phrases which do not exist in the ST. This can be seen from following data:
- ST: *Jasa perhotelan, yaitu jasa penyewaan kamar atau jasa penyewaan ruangan di hotel yang merupakan objek pajak daerah dan retribusi daerah sesuai peraturan perundang-undangan di bidang pajak dan retribusi daerah.*
- GT: Hotel services, namely **room rental services or room rental services** in hotels which are objects of regional tax and regional levies in accordance with laws and regulations in the field of regional taxes and levies.
- SG: Hotel services, namely room rental services in hotels which are objects of regional tax and regional levies in accordance with laws and regulations in the field of regional taxes and levies. Omission of double phrase "room rental services"
2. Syntactic Error
- a. Incorrect Words order  
Words are not arranged in the correct in target language. In this research, the data of subchapter cannot be found.
- b. Incorrect grammatical Structure in target language.

MT fails to translate correctly because of incorrect Grammar and structure, this can be seen from following data:

ST: *Cerita bercerita tentang seorang anak yang bernama Malin Kundang. Malin Hidup bersama ibunya di sebuah desa pesisir pantai Sumatera Barat.*

GT: The first folk tale **is** the story of Malin Kundang. The story **tells** about a child named Malin Kundang. Malin **lives** with her mother in a coastal village in West Sumatra.

SG: The first folk tale **was** the story of Malin Kundang. The story **told** about a child named Malin Kundang. Malin **lived** with her mother in a coastal village in West Sumatra. The tale must use Past Tense.

ST: *Clara Dimiliki Oleh Roh Jahat. Saat itu tahun 1906, dan Clara adalah seorang siswa Kristen berusia enam belas tahun di Misi St. Michael di Natal, Afrika Selatan. Meskipun alasannya tidak diketahui, beberapa mengatakan bahwa melalui doa dan doa dan yang lainnya sebagai akibat dari ritual aneh, mereka mengatakan bahwa wanita muda itu akhirnya membuat perjanjian dengan Setan. Beberapa hari kemudian, Clara menderita serangkaian dorongan aneh*

GT: Clara is Possessed by an Evil Spirit. It was 1906, and Clara was a sixteen-year-old Christian student at St. Michael's Mission in Natal, South Africa. Although the reason **is** unknown, some say it was through prayer and supplication and others as a result of strange rituals, they **say** the young woman finally made a pact with Satan. A few days later, Clara suffered a series of strange urges

SG: The above paragraph must use Past Tense because it described about past activities.

ST: *Olimpiade Paris 2024 jadi Olimpiade terbaik kedua dalam sejarah Indonesia di pesta olahraga terbesar dunia tersebut bila merujuk ke perhitungan medali*

GT: The 2024 Paris Olympics **will be** the second best Olympics in Indonesia's history at the world's biggest sporting event if we **refer** to the medal count.

SG: The 2024 Paris Olympics **were** the second best Olympics in Indonesia's history at the world's biggest sporting event if we **referred** to the medal count. Olympic 2024 in Paris was already over, so Past Tense must be used because above sentences use specific time signal.

ST: *Presiden RI Prabowo Subianto mengeklaim, dirinya dan jajaran Kabinet Merah Putih sudah bisa memberikan banyak hal penting meski baru satu bulan menjabat.*

GT: Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto **claims** that he and the Red and White Cabinet have been able to provide many important things even though he has only been in office for one month.

SG: Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto **claimed** that he and the Red and White Cabinet have been able to provide many important things even though he has only been in office for one month. Sentences above must be Past Tense because activities of the subject happened.

ST: *Menurut Prabowo, rakyat merasa bahwa pemerintah berkomitmen untuk terus berpihak kepada rakyat dan kepentingan nasional.*

GT: According to Prabowo, the people **feel** that the government **is committed** to continuing to side with the people and national

SG: According to Prabowo, the people **felt** that the government **was committed** to continuing to side with the people and national.

ST: *Istri Kumar pun melayangkan gugatan ke pengadilan atas kekeliruan ini dan tetap meminta jenazah suaminya dipulangkan ke India agar bisa dimakamkan dengan tata cara Hindu*

GT: Kumar's wife has filed a lawsuit in court over the error and continues to demand that her husband's body be returned to India so that he can be buried according to Hindu rites.

SG: Kumar's wife has filed a lawsuit against the error and **continued** to demand that her husband's body be returned to India so that he could be buried according to Hindu rites.

Sentences above must be in Past Tense

c. Incorrect sentence boundary

MT fails to combine or divide sentences correctly. In this research there is no data about this subchapter.

3. Semantic Error

a. Misinterpretation of meaning.

The researcher cannot find misinterpreted data of MT.

b. Loss of meaning

Important nuances and subtleties are lost in the translation. This also same with misinterpretation of meaning above, there is no data about this subchapter.

c. Incoherence translation

The translated text is illogical or nonsensical. This can be seen from following data.

ST: *Menurut Kementerian Dalam Negeri India (MEA), petugas berwenang dari MEA harus dihadirkan ke persidangan pada 18 Maret 2021 mendatang untuk menjelaskan langkah-langkah yang harus ditempuh dan bagaimana moda transportasi untuk membawa jenazah tersebut," kata Hakim Singh.*

GT: According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MEA), an authorized officer from the MEA should be produced before the court on March 18, 2021 to explain the steps to be taken and how the body will be transported," Justice Singh said.

SG: According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MEA), an authorized officer from the MEA should be **presented** before the court on March 18, 2021 to explain the steps **had been taken** and how the body **had been** transported," Justice Singh said.

Paragraph above become incoherence because the sequence of what happens are illogical due to wrong grammar and structure.

ST: *Komunikasi merupakan serangkaian aktifitas yang sering kita temui di kehidupan sehari - hari. Tak jarang, komunikasi inilah yang membangun suasana dan memperlancar kegiatan atau rutinitas manusia*

GT: Communication is a series of activities that we often encounter in everyday life. Not infrequently, this communication is what builds the atmosphere and facilitates human activities or routines.

SG: Communication is a series of activities that we often encounter in everyday life. **frequently**, this communication builds the atmosphere and facilitates human activities or routines. Erase words "is what" Translated paragraph above is not logic and coherence because misinterpretation of the word in frequently and unnecessary phrase.

4. Pragmatic Error

a. Culture misunderstandings

The MT fails to account for cultural differences and context between source language and target text. Unfortunately, in this subchapter the data about this subchapter cannot be found

b. Inappropriate register

The translation machine uses the wrong level of formality or style. In this subchapter also same with above (a) There is no data about it.

### Conclusion

From data analysis, the researcher can conclude that GT in translating 30 sentences from Indonesian Source Text (ST) to English Target Text (TT) from selected sentences quoted online with the following description. Lexical error has 4 errors or 13%. Missing words, no data, Extraneous translated word has 1 error or 3.3%. In the level of syntax, Incorrect order no data, Incorrect grammar and structure has 6 errors or 20%. Incorrect sentence boundary has no data. In Semantic Error, Misinterpretation no data Loss of word also no data, Incoherence translation has 2 errors or 6.6%. Pragmatic error which consists of 2 subpoints namely cultural Misunderstanding and inappropriate register do not have any data.

Regardless of the sophisticated MT in this case GT, it still has a lot of errors that in the future for the users of GT shall check and recheck its translation because it is only a machine who has been programmed in a such a way to translate. Thus it does not have sense of language, culture and human being.

There are many weaknesses of translating machine, so it is suggested for the other researcher who are interested about translation to dig and develop translation in order in the future the use of translating machine become more and more accurate.

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