Grammatical Errors in French Translation of the Short Story *Moi et la Danse de Semarang*

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**ABSTRACT**

In translation involves the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), and grammar has an essential role in the use of language. In French, a lack of mastery in French grammar may lead to some errors in translation. This study attempts to describe the grammatical errors made by students and find the solutions. The study was conducted by using a descriptive qualitative method with an error analysis approach. The object of this research was the French translation of the short story *Moi et la danse de Semarang*. The results show some grammatical errors in the short story including errors in verb, noun, adjective, and preposition. Then, the type of grammatical error often made by students is "misformation." The solutions to solve them are students must have good grammar skills and practice a lot to write French well, and the mistakes can be reduced. This study should provide comprehension and information about the phenomenon of translation errors in grammatical aspects, especially from Indonesian into French. This study can also be used as an evaluation material for students to find out their mistakes and reduce other translation errors.

**Keywords:** Error analysis, grammar, short story, translation.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Language is used to communicate every day. Nowadays, communication is not limited to the mother tongue (MT). Learning a foreign language becomes important to be able to compete in the world. Learning a foreign language is also the need of every person. By mastering a foreign language, a person can improve their competence. Today, Indonesia is working with several countries around the world, including France. Some Indonesian students are also learning French.

French is the foreign language (we know it as L2) for Indonesian students. They learn French after mastering Indonesian (L1). The use of two languages (Indonesian, which is more fluent than French) causes the mixing of structural elements of the two languages, especially if the languages come from different families. Finally, in the translation, it will cause some errors caused by the influence of L1. In this study, the researchers perform analysis to reduce the mistakes in the translation of the short story.

In the translation of the short story, two languages are involved, there are Indonesian as the source language (SL) and French as the target language (TL). Every language has a complex system. Indonesian (SL) and French (TL) have different grammar. To translate the short story, it is necessary to adapt the grammar of the target language (TL) to the source language (SL).

Grammar has an important role in the use of language. Grammar is the study of rules used in language (Zulfa, 2019). Grammar is difficult and complicated to teach and learn because there are millions of elements to master (Barus, Sembiring, & Syahrin, 2015). Words or phrases combine grammar to produce sentences, and students have to master the grammar well (Fahmi, 2016). Grammar regulates the composition of clauses, sentences, and words in the language. Grammar combines several parts like subject, verb, article, noun, adjective, adverb, etc. Even in French, there are many grammatical rules which are complex and varied. If the grammar is not mastered well, it will cause some errors.

Some similar studies have been done related to error analysis, especially in grammatical errors analysis in translation. A study by Pramesti, Mutiarsih & Darmawangsa (2019) entitled "Grammatical Errors in French Translation: Case of Indonesian Students".
study attempts to investigate the errors in the grammatical aspects found in the translation of Indonesian language press articles that had been translated into French by students and to propound the frequency of errors that were most often done. The results of this research are the most frequent grammatical error that occurred in the translation process is on the 'time aspect' with the frequency of 64 times from 313 total mistakes. Those errors were caused by the student's tendency to do misformation as they could not choose which tense fits with the context of the sentence. The difference with the study to be conducted is this study analyses the grammatical errors made by students in the French translation of the press articles. In contrast, the research to be conducted analyzes the grammatical errors in the French translation of the short story.

And also, a study conducted by Fitri and Arianto (2020) entitled "Grammatical Errors Analysis in Odd Semester Final Exam Results in the I-Nichi Honyaku Course". This study aims to correct errors that occurred in the Odd Semester Final Exam results in the I-Nichi Honyaku Course. The results showed that there is one omission error, one addition error, seven misformation errors. Then, the factor of all the mistakes that occur is the condition of the student's language competence. The differences with the study conducted are: this study analyzes the grammatical errors made by students in the French translation of the press articles. In contrast, the research to be conducted analyzes grammatical errors in the French translation of the short story.

The previous studies above demonstrate that there are still many errors, especially grammatical errors in the translation of foreign language caused by certain factors. So that, the study in error analysis is needed to reduce the occurrence of the next error. Error analysis can help the students learn the language. It is a medium to learn how students learn a foreign language (Nurwicaksono & Amelia, 2018). Error analysis is done to know the cause of their errors and practice self-correction (Amra, 2015). Then, it is very important to do the error analysis to find out the cause of errors made by students when learning a foreign language, especially in French translation.

According to error analysis in French translation in grammatical aspect, some theories discuss grammar. The following is orthograph grammar research in college with a socio-differentiated approach. This research explains that the correct production of the agreement depends on many factors, namely:

1. The complexity of nominal subject group, for example le chien des voisins, [the neighbor's dog] or the presence of a pronoun identical to a determinant, example: le facteur les timbres, [the factor stamps them]; wrong agreements frequently occur;
2. The distance between determinant and noun: in CE1 and CM2, students mark final plural -s of the noun more easily when the determinant is close to this noun, for example, des engins, [gear] than when it is further away, example: des petites engins, [smaller gear];
3. The sentence structure: in 5th grade and adults, there are many agreement errors in sentences where the group according to the subject includes a noun complement, for example: le gamin des jeunes voisins parle, [the young neighbor's kid talks] than in sentences where the group according to the subject includes a relative, example: le singe qui imite les OURSONS grimpe, [the monkey that imitates cubs climbs];
4. The form and length of the nominal group as a function of the subject: there are many correct agreements with reduced nominal groups (determinant + noun) and starting with a frequent and well-marked determinant (les or des) than with a long subject phrase or with a less typical plural determinant (nos).

(Totereau, Brissaud, Reilhac, & Bosse, 2013)

Then, refers to analysis of grammatical errors, in teaching French as foreign language, it is possible to study the errors in three categories:

1. Nominal group: there are lexical and grammatical errors such as determinant (articles: feminine, masculine), adjectives (comparative, superlative), agreements in gender and number, genitives, compounds (nouns and adjectives), etc.
2. Verbal group: morphological errors such as verb conjugations, tenses, aspects, modality auxiliaries, passivation, and others (gerunds, infinitives), etc.
3. Sentence structure: Syntactic errors such as word order, relative pronouns, conjunctions, linking words, punctuation, and spelling.

(Demirtas & Gümüş, 2009, p. 130)

In the study of grammatical errors and the nominal group, verbal group, and sentence structure, grammatical errors may also occur in the adjective group. The following is a study that discusses adjectives in French consists of:

1. Numeral adjective.
2. Demonstrative adjective: ce, cet, cette, ces.
3. Possessive adjective: mon, ma, mes, ton, ta, tes, etc.

(Delatour, Jennepin, Teyssier, & Léon-Dufour, 1991)
One of the most important and quite complicated elements to master is the use of prepositions (Barus et al., 2015). Prepositions are invariable words that can introduce the complement of a noun, a verb, an adjective and an adverb. The use of prepositions is found in forming certain verbs needing preposition at the end of these verbs. Besides that, it can also be found to indicate the country's name, time, purpose, possessiveness, etc. For example, it is so difficult to distinguish between two phrase "parler à quelqu'un" and "parler avec quelqu'un" [talking with someone]. Habitually, people often use the phrase "je parle avec Monsieur Dupont". This error is currently caused by the mother tongue (MT) and the language used in every day. The correct sentence is "je parle à Monsieur Dupont" [I'm talking to Mr. Dupont]. This is why the use of prepositions is quite complicated, and we must pay attention to its application from the use and function of each preposition (Barus et al., 2015).

To do the error analysis, there are some part and type of error. This study uses the Surface Strategy Taxonomy where there are four types of errors:

1. Omission
   This is the error where there is a certain part omitted in a sentence. For example: "Je mange pain et je bois lait" [I eat bread and drink milk]. This sentence is incorrect. There is omission error because there is no partitive article "du" for the word "pain" [bread] and "lait" [milk].

2. Addition
   On the other hand, the addition error is adding another element in a sentence, such as: "Ils partent aux supermarchés avec Sarah, avec Nina, et avec Jeanne" [they go to the supermarkets with Sarah, with Nina, and with Jeanne]. In fact, the element "avec" [with] should only be used once, the correct phrase is "avec Sarah, Nina et Jeanne" [with Sarah, Nina and Jeanne].

3. Misformation error
   The misformation error means there is mis formation in the sentence, such as lack of past participle agreement, adjective agreement, etc. For example: "Elle a achetée des légumes au marché" [she bought vegetables at the market]. There are some errors in this sentence. The correct sentence is "Elle a acheté des légumes au marché". Pay attention to the agreement of the past participle, adjective, and contract clause.

4. Misordering error
   While misordering error relates to the structure or order of word in a sentence. For example: "Il donne me des cadeaux ce matin" [He gives me presents this morning]. The word "me" must be placed before the verb conjugation "donne".

(Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982)

The study of grammatical error analysis in the translation of Indonesian into French still receives minor attention (Pramesti et al., 2015). Therefore, based on the context and research background, this study is relevant to be conducted in order to provide comprehension and information about the phenomenon of translation errors in grammatical aspects, especially from Indonesian into French, and can also be used as an evaluation material for students to find out their mistakes and reduce the error in further translation. The problems raised in this study are as follows: 1) What are the grammatical errors found in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang"? 2) What type of grammatical error is often made by students? 3) What are the solutions to solve them? Then, the research objectives based on the problems are to describe: 1) The grammatical errors that are found in French translation the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang"; 2) The type of grammatical error that often made by the students; and 3) The solutions to solve the grammatical errors in translation.

2. METHOD

The students created a short story book for teenagers which contains the discernment of local culture. The title of the book is "Voyage de l’Imagination à Semarang". In this book, there are four titles of short stories: "Moi et la Danse de Semarang, Mille Portes Mille Histoires, La Journée avec Warak et Tout Puissant pour Ker". There is also translation from French to Indonesian.

Regarding the importance of error analysis as the medium to find out how students learn the foreign language (see Nurwicaksono & Amelia, 2018) and error analysis in translation is required to show the students the cause of their errors and to practice self-correction (see Amra, 2015), so that the researchers are interested in analyzing grammatical errors in French translation in this book, because it is the result of the Student Creativity Program which has never been studied before. However, due to limited time, the researchers only choose one title of short story to study, namely "Moi et la danse de Semarang" which is the first short story presented in this book and the researchers found many grammatical errors in it.

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. It is a method to describe and analyze the phenomenon, event, social activity, behaviour, belief, perception, thought of a person or a group (Sukmadinata, 2016). In this study, the researchers conducted a process of data analysis based on the theory stated by Miles and Huberman (1994) consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The following is more detailed explanation of the process used in this study:

1) Data reduction, in this process the researchers sort and classify the data obtained in accordance with the
types of errors proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) regarding the grammatical aspects;

2) Data display, after reducing the data, the researchers described the result of the study based on the type of errors and its grammatical aspects;

3) Conclusion drawing or verification, the next step is drawing conclusions which can answer the problems that has been analysed previously.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang", the researchers found 27 errors made by students. There is grammatical error in the omission category (3,7%), addition category (18,5%), misformation category (77,8%) and no errors found in misordering category. Table 1 is a list of types of grammatical error and its frequency of occurrence.

Based on the Table 2, the result of error shows that the error mostly comes from grammatical misformation aspect for as much 21 times or equivalent to 77,8%. The misformation error means there is mis formation in the sentence. It is characterized by inappropriate use of form or structure in morphemes (Dulay et al., 1982). So, we can conclude that the students are not able to write a good sentence. This is due to the students cannot determine the appropriate tenses with a certain context in a sentence. In addition, the least error mostly made by students is omission error. The omission error is characterized by the absence of a part that must appear in a sentence (Dulay et al., 1982). The omission error appears only 1 time or equivalent to 3,7%, it is preposition. The further explanation of the errors found is as follow:

3.1. Omission

Based on the data analysis from a total of 27 errors made by students in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang", the omission aspect appeared only 1 time or equivalent to 3,7%: it is preposition. This error due to the quite complicated use of preposition as previously explained (see Barus et al., 2015). The students may still be confused about how to apply it properly. Below is the explanation about the error:

Omission: "Preposition"

The omission error found in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang" created by the students is the elimination of preposition. Here is the analysis of the error:

Data 12-OMS1

Aku selalu meluangkan waktu ke rumah Marshelia...

[Je prends toujours le temps de venir chez Marseelia ...]

The translation from the data above has some types of grammatical errors, but there is only 1 error classified as omission. The supposed translation is “Je prends toujours du temps à venir chez Marshelia ...” [I always take the time to come to Marshallia's house]. So, it can be seen that the students did the disappearance in preposition "de" in phrase "prendre le temps". In fact, the phrase "prendre le temps" is correct too, but would be better place the preposition "de" in phrase "prendre le temps de venir" because it is followed by the preposition "de" and the verb "venir". Among several functions of preposition, sometimes verbs also need a preposition to be placed after the verb (Barus et al., 2015). However, the translation’s loss of the preposition "de" does not change the meaning, but it is not appropriate when being viewed from a grammatical perspective.

3.2. Addition

The addition error is characterized by the elements that are not supposed to appear in a sentence, in which the addition error occurs when learners have started to get to know the rules of the target language (Dulay et al., 1982). Based on the data analysis from a total of 27 errors

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Table 1. Frequency of occurrence of grammatical errors

| No. | Types of errors | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Omission       | 1         | 3.7%           |
| 2.  | Addition       | 5         | 18.5%          |
| 3.  | Misformation   | 21        | 77.8%          |
| 4.  | Misordering    | 0         | 0              |
| TOTAL |               | 27        | 100%           |

Table 2. Frequency of error based on grammatical elements

| Types of error                  | Frequency | Total |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Omission                        | Preposition | 1     |
| Addition                        | Verb (repetition of verb) | 1     | 5     |
|                                 | Noun (pronoun)       | 1     |
|                                 | Preposition          | 3     |
| Misformation                    | Adjective (feminine or masculine) | 6     | 21    |
|                                 | Noun (pronoun, gender of noun, article, noun typo) | 6     |
|                                 | Verb (verb conjugation, present tense and past tense verb, agreement) | 8     |
|                                 | Preposition          | 1     |
| Misordering                     | -                     | 0     | 0     |
made by students in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang", the addition aspect appeared 5 times or equivalent to 18.5% which is divided into three parts, namely verb, pronoun and preposition with the frequent error made in preposition. The students should be careful in translating sentence, especially in determining prepositions. The following is an explanation of these errors:

3.2.1. Addition: "Preposition"

One of the additional errors students make in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang" is the addition of prepositions that appeared 3 times. These prepositions actually should not exist. Here is an example of the data:

**Data 14-ADD2**

…aku ingin membanggakan Indonesia.
[... je veux être fier de l’Indonésie.]

In the translation "je veux être fier de l’Indonésie"., there are some types of errors, but only 1 grammatical error of addition in preposition. The supposed translation is "je veux rendre l’Indonésie fière" [I want to make Indonesia proud]. To say "membanggakan" in French, the verb used is "rendre fière" because the subject is a girl (féminin) and the preposition "de" is not needed in this sentence to be placed after the verb "rendre" (Inspirassion, n.d.). However, this addition can affect the meaning because the translation "…je veux être fier de l’Indonésie." has the meaning "I want to be proud of Indonesia".

3.2.2. Addition: "Repetition of verb"

Another addition error found in the translation is students repeat verbs in one sentence, as seen in the following data:

**Data 15-ADD3**

…Bu Mirah mau mengasuh dan merawatku dengan sangat baik ...
[... Mme Mirah, voulait prendre soin de moi et très bien prendre soin de moi ...]

The translation from data above has a grammatical error that is classified as addition. The supposed translation is "... Mme Mirah a très bien pris soin de moi ... " [Mrs. Mirah took great care of me]. The students repeat the verb "prendre soin de moi". In fact, the students should use one "prendre soin de moi". However, the two additional verbs in translated sentence above are not appropriate from grammatical aspect because of redundancy.

3.2.3. Addition: "Pronoun"

Another addition error found in the translation is students adding pronoun in a sentence, as seen in the following data:

**Data 16-ADD4**

Aku diam ...
[Je me tais tu ...]

The translation result of data above contains grammatical error classified as a type of addition error. The correct translation is "Je me tais ...". The students shouldn't add the pronoun "tu" [you] in this translation. Error of adding the pronoun "tu" is not appropriate from grammatical aspect.

3.3. Misformation

According to the data analysis from a total of 27 errors made by students in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang", the misformation aspect appeared 21 times or equivalent to 77.8%, making it the most common error made by students in translation. Misformation error characterized by the inappropriate placement of morphemes or group morphemes in an utterance (Dulay et al., 1982). According to the frequency table of grammatical errors, the students made an inappropriate placement divided into four parts: misformation verb, adjective, noun, and preposition. The following is the explanation of the errors:

3.3.1. Misformation: "Verb"

Students mostly make this error in conjugating the verb or determining the appropriate tenses (both present and past tense) with a certain context in a sentence. The following are data for verb errors in present tense:

**Data 05-MFO1**

…aku bisa menambah teman.
[... je avoir plus d’amis.]

Translation of data above contains grammatical error classified as misformation. The correct translation is "... j’ai plus d’amis" [I have more friends]. In the translation above, the students made the error in verb conjugation "avoir". The students should conjugate the verb "avoir" in present tense. The conjugation in present tense has a function to state actual events that occur at the present time and to state habitual actions (Artha, 2015). This error doesn't affect the meaning but it is not appropriate from grammatical aspect.

The same error in verb conjugation in present tense also occurs in the other sentence, as in the following data:

**Data 06-MFO2**

Lihat... 1... 2... 3... Seperti ini Ayo Nindya...
[Regarde ... 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... comme ça. Allez, Nindya ...]
Translation of data above contains grammatical error classified as misformation. The correct translation is “J'ai toujours trouvé le temps de venir chez Marshelia...” [Look, 1 2 3 like that. Come on, Nindya]. In the short story, the verb conjugation "regardez" is intended for subject "vous", so the correct conjugation is "regardez" (Le Figaro, n.d.). This error doesn’t affect the meaning because readers can still understand, but it is not appropriate for the grammatical aspect.

In addition, the students also make mistakes in choosing verbs in present tense. The following is the example of the data:

**Data 02-MFO10**

“J'ai devenu un excellent élève au lycée...”

In the translation “j'ai devenu un excellent élève de l'Indonésie.”, there are some types of errors, but only two grammatical errors of misformation, namely: verb and adjective that of course change the sentence's meaning and it is not appropriate from grammatical aspect. To say “membanggakan” in French, the verb used is "rendre fière". The correct translation is “j'ai voulu rendre l'Indonésie fière” [I want to make Indonesia proud].

Then, the students also made some mistakes in using verb in past tense. The following is an example of the data:

**Data 04-MFO06**

“Aku menjadi murid berprestasi di sekolah...”

There are some errors classified as misformation in the translation above. The correct translation is “Je suis devenu un excellent élève au lycée” [I became an excellent student in school]. The misformation error is made in article, adjective and past participle agreement. The past-participle (passé compose) is used to express past events (Artha, 2015). Therefore, because the subject is feminine, the students have to adjust the agreement “-e” in the past participle "devenu". The error of past-participle doesn't affect the meaning but it is not appropriate from grammatical aspect.

### 3.3.2. Misformation: "Adjective"

This error means the students were mistaken in choosing adjective with a certain context in a sentence. In the short story, the subject is feminine. The students often make mistakes in determining feminine adjectives. In French, adjectives are adjusted agreement according to the genre of noun (feminine or masculine) (Delatour, Jennepin, Léon-Dufour, & Teysier, 2004, p. 38). The following is an example of the data:

**Data 01-MFO08**

“Sewaktu aku masih kecil. [...quand j’étais petit.]”

The translation above contains grammatical error in adjective classified as misformation. The students make mistake in determining feminine adjectives. The students should adjust the agreement “-e” for the adjective "petit" (Bitesize, n.d.). So that, the correct translation is “...quand j'étais petite.” [when I was little]. This adjective error does not alter the meaning but are incorrect when viewed from grammatical aspect.

### 3.3.3. Misformation: "Noun"

In this case, the students made errors by choosing incorrect nouns that do not fit the context and subject of the sentence, as seen in the following data example:

**Data 02-MFO10**

“J'ai devenu un excellent élève au lycée...”

In the translation above, there is misformation error in the sentence, as seen in the following data example:

**Data 07-MFO12**

“Marshelia tidak boleh bilang begitu, ...”

There is other grammatical error classified as misformation. The students make mistake in choosing pronoun that do not fit the context, such as the following data:

**Data 12-MFO13**

“Aku selalu meluangkan waktu ke rumah Marshelia...”

In the translation above, there is misformation error in pronoun. We'd better use the pronoun "on" which means "we". While the pronoun "il" is used to replace subject masculine. In this case, verb conjugation of the pronoun "on" takes the conjugation of pronoun "il" (Michelle, n.d.). So that, the correct translation is "Allez, Marshelia, on ne peut pas dire comme ça" [Come on, Marshelia, we can't say like that]. This error changes the sentence's meaning and also not appropriate from grammatical aspect.

Then, in other case, the students make misformation error in typing name, as in the following example:

**Data 03-MFO09**

“Aku selalu meluangkan waktu ke rumah Marshelia...”

The translation above contains grammatical error classified as misformation. The students make mistake in
typing name "Mareslia". The correct name is "Marshelia". This error doesn't affect the meaning, but not appropriate from grammatical aspect.

3.3.4. Misformation: "Preposition"

The one of misformation errors made by students that occur in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang" is error using preposition. Here is the data:

Data 12-MFO13
Aku selalu meluangkan waktu ke rumah Marshelia ...
[Je prends toujours le temps de venir chez Marshelia ...]

Like the previous analysis, there is an error in typing name "Mareslia" in this translation. In addition, this data also contains error in the use of preposition. In this sentence, the students shouldn't use the preposition "de" but they must use the preposition "à" after the verb "prendre" and before the verb "venir". It is difficult to determine the preposition because the students are often confused to use and distinguish the preposition "à" and "de". For some verbs, students are doubtful whether to use the preposition, either "à" or "de" (Barus et al., 2015). This error of preposition doesn't affect the meaning because readers still can understand, but not appropriate from grammatical aspect.

4. CONCLUSION

From the question of research and also based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that grammatical errors found in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang" are verb (verb conjugation, repetition of verb, present tense and past tense verb, agreement), noun (pronoun, gender of noun, article, typo noun), adjective and preposition. The most frequent grammatical error made is verb error with total of 9 errors. This result shows us that when translating in French, the students who has made the short story are difficult to conjugate the verb or determine the appropriate tenses with a certain context in a sentence.

There are several possibilities that cause the errors, such as: verb conjugation that should always adjust the subject (masculine or feminine and singular or plural). The students must pay attention to the addition of agreement, and also, they must understand well some used tenses, however we know that there are many rules to conjugate although only one verb. This condition causes the difficulty.

Then, the type of error often made in French translation of the short story "Moi et la danse de Semarang" is "misformation" with 21 errors or equivalent to 77.8%. The students make a lot of mistakes to form a word even a sentence.

The proposed solutions to solve the problem of grammatical error in French translation are the students must have good grammar skills and practice a lot so that they are able to write French well and the mistakes can be reduced.

The results of this study are expected to provide comprehension and information about the phenomenon of translation errors in grammatical aspects, especially from Indonesian into French. This research can also be used as an evaluation material for students to find out their mistakes and reduce further translation errors.

However, this research still has limitations because it only examines one title of short story. Thus, further research is expected to complete research related to grammatical errors made by students in French translation of short story. A deeper analysis is needed for other titles in the short story book "Voyage de l’Imagination à Semarang".

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